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THE DOOMED DOZEN; or, DOLORES, THE DANITE'S DAUGHTER.

A ROMANCE OF BORDER TRAILS AND MORMON MYSTERIES.

BY DR. FRANK POWELL,

"White Beaver," the Medicine Chief of the Winnebago Indians.



THE BLACK JURY SAID IN CHORUS: "FAREWELL, FOREVER, JOHN LEIGH!"

The Doomed Dozen;

OR,

Dolores, The Danite's Daughter.**A Romance of Border Trails and Mormon Mysteries.**BY DR. FRANK POWELL,
"WHITE BEAVER," THE MEDICINE CHIEF OF
THE WINNEBAGO INDIANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUICIDE'S DAUGHTER.

"DOLORES, I love you."

The words were breathed forth with impassioned earnestness from the lips of a man.

They were addressed to a young and beautiful girl, whose face betrayed no pleasure at the utterance of her companion, but rather pain.

The two were standing in the conservatory, opening from a parlor furnished with a luxurious elegance that indicated the home of wealth and refinement.

The man wore the undress uniform of a captain in the army, and his face was noble in expression, resolute and handsome, his form above the medium height, and indicative of strength and activity.

The lady was youthful, scarcely eighteen in fact, attired in a dark silk, with long train, that fitted her faultless form to perfection.

Her face was exquisitely lovely, and of an Italian type of beauty, that was in fine contrast to the blue eyes and golden hair of her companion.

"I am sorry, very sorry, Captain Moncrief," was the low reply.

"Sorry! sorry that I love you, Dolores Moultrie?" he asked reproachfully.

"Yes, Captain Moncrief, for yours is a hopeless love, and, knowing your noble nature well, I am sorry to give you pain, for you and I can never be more to each other than now we are."

She spoke firmly and looked him squarely in the eyes, though her face was very pale, and her lips quivered slightly.

"Will Miss Dolores Moultrie kindly inform me why we cannot be more to each other than the friends we now are?" he asked with a tone of sarcasm.

"Why will you not take my word that we must remain friends, and not force me to say more?" she asked pettishly.

"I will tell you why, Dolores.

"One night, now ten years ago, I saw a woman spring from the deck of a Sound steamer, with a child in her arms.

"Her pale, sad face, when I saw her in the cabin, had touched me, and seeing her take her little girl by the hand and go out upon the after deck in the storm, for it was blowing hard, I followed her.

"I heard her words:

"God forgive me! but it is better so; yes, better so!"

"Then, ere I could prevent, she seized her child in her arms and sprung into the tempest-lashed waters.

"I called loudly for help, tore a life-preserved from the rack overhead, and bounded after her.

"The officer on duty heard my cry, saw my act, and ordered the steamer stopped immediately and a life-boat launched.

"I had, in the mean time, reached the drowning woman and her child, and fastened the life-preserved around the former, while I took the latter in my arms, at the same time loudly hailing the boat, to show where we were.

"The woman seemed determined to die, and was unconscious when taken into the boat; but the little girl did not mind her ducking in the least.

"While I was changing my clothes in my state-room the stewardess came for me and said the lady was conscious and wished to see me.

"I obeyed her request, and found her dying.

"But she had strength enough to beg me to care for her child, gave me her purse of money, and that is all I knew of her, other than that I could see that she was a lady.

"I pledged my word to care for her child, and carried her to my mother's, and she took the little girl into her heart and her household.

"Dolores, I was then just twenty, and had graduated a week before at West Point.

"That was ten years ago, and in all that time the image of that little girl has been in

my heart, and now you tell me that we cannot be more than we are, friends.

"No, no, Dolores Moultrie, I love you, and if you have not, while I have been on the frontier, fallen in love with another, you shall be my wife."

"Would you have me marry a man I do not love, Howland?" she asked calmly.

"No, no, not that, not that; only I was vain enough to think you did care for me, for when on leave at home, each time you have treated me so kindly. "You do not love me then, Dolores?" he asked in almost piteous tones.

"Only as a brother, Howland," she faltered.

"Ah, Dolores, I have deceived myself most cruelly."

"I owe you my life, Howland, and never can I forget you; yet never can I be your wife," she said firmly.

"So be it, if you say truly that you do not love me."

"I do not love you, Howland."

He bowed his head an instant, his form quivering with suppressed emotion, and then taking her hands he drew her toward him, pressed a sudden, impulsive kiss upon her forehead, and said:

"That is my farewell to love, Dolores; henceforth we are friends only."

"Yes, friends only."

He made no reply, but turning away, left the conservatory and walked hastily across the lawn.

As he departed another approached and joined Dolores, whose face was white, and whose lips were quivering, while her tiny hands were clasped close together.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECRET.

THE one who approached Dolores, when Captain Howland Moncrief left her, and, unseen by the maiden, glided out from behind the heavy velvet curtains in the parlor, where she had been hiding and heard all that was said, was a stately woman, with a cold, proud face, and the air of one born to refinement and riches.

Dressed superbly, and sparkling with diamonds, for it was near the dinner hour, Mrs. Marmaduke Moncrief swept up to where Dolores stood, the very picture of despair, and said in a soft, velvety tone that had in it not one atom of sympathy:

"Dolores, my sweet child, you have done well, for I heard all."

She kissed the maiden as she spoke, and lowered her eyes before the gaze fastened upon her, as Dolores replied:

"I did as you demanded, madam; I sacrificed myself and gave pain to your son, that your ambitious views regarding him might be gratified."

"Dolores, you forget yourself," said the lady, sternly.

"No, Mrs. Moncrief, I do not forget that I have no claim upon you, and that I came to your house with only my name, and not even knowing whether I have a right to that."

"No, no, madam, I have lived on your charity for ten long years, and, in your way, you have been very kind to me."

"But I sinned in loving your son, and for that sin you have punished me."

"Now I will no longer than to-morrow burden you with my presence, for I can teach, give music lessons, paint, and in many ways earn an honest livelihood, while the little money my poor mother had in her purse will support me until I can make sufficient to support myself."

"I thank you, Mrs. Moncrief, for all you have done for me, and one day hope to repay it."

"Dolores, are you mad?" cried the woman, evidently frightened at the determination of the maiden.

"No, madam, I am sane," was the haughty reply.

"But you cannot, shall not, leave this house."

"Pardon me, but I will do as I please in this matter, having acted to please you in one that was a more important step."

"But Howland will not permit you to go."

"Captain Moncrief has no claim upon me, madam."

"Oh, Dolores, I beg of you not to leave me, for Howland will be furious," and it was evident that the lady feared her son's just wrath, should he know that his mother, to have him marry her choice, a silly young heiress, had

urged upon Dolores to refuse him, telling her that she was but a charity child, and none knew who her parents were.

But Dolores Moultrie, for such she had said was her name, had a proud heart and iron will, and that night, when all was quiet, crept out of the elegant mansion, carrying with her only a small valise in her hand, and going forth into the cold world friendless and alone, determined never again to cross the threshold of the house of Mrs. Moncrief, who so bitterly had made her feel all that she was, as soon as she knew that her son had learned to love the little waif whose life he had saved and whom he had begged his aristocratic mother to care for, for his sake.

CHAPTER III.

MOTHER AND SON.

CAPTAIN HOWLAND MONCRIEF sauntered into the breakfast-room, a cloud upon his brow and a haggard look in his eyes, for he had slept little during the night, the pain at his heart of unrequited love being with him more than a passing emotion.

He had not seen Dolores since their parting in the conservatory, as she had excused herself from dinner on the plea of indisposition, and he started at the rustle of a dress in the hall.

But it was his mother, and, though she tried to look cheerful it was evident she did not feel so.

He greeted her affectionately, and at the same time asked:

"How is Dolores, mother?"

"I have not seen her this morning."

"Indeed!"

Stepping to the bell-rope, Captain Moncrief gave it a decidedly hard pull.

"Benson, send Judith to Miss Moultrie's room and ask her, with my compliments, how she is feeling this morning, and if we are not to see her at breakfast?"

The servant obeyed, but Judith soon returned with the startling statement that:

"Miss Dolores was not in her room, and the bed had not been slept in."

At the same time she handed the captain a note.

He took it with trembling fingers and white face, and read, as the girl left the room:

"CAPTAIN HOWLAND MONCRIEF:

My DEAR FRIEND—After all your kindness to me in the past, it is a poor return for me to steal from your home in the night like a guilty creature; but I do so for the welfare and happiness of us all, as I cannot longer remain beneath this roof.

"As we will never meet again, you may ask your mother why I leave.

"With a heart full of thanks for all that I owe you, and wishing you a life of happiness,

"Your friend ever,

"DOLORES."

Twice he read the letter aloud, and then said:

"Mother, what does this mean?"

His voice was low, earnest and stern, and Mrs. Moncrief felt that she had gone too far: but she was determined to have it out, and said coldly:

"It means that in return for our devotion to her she has left our home for some one's protection she doubtless likes better."

"But whose protection, mother?"

"She had many admirers, and I intended to marry her off well; but she has chosen differently."

"Mother! not one word against Dolores: do not dare to cast one aspersion upon her, or I will leave this house forever."

"I told you that I loved her and intended making her my wife: but alas! she refused my love, and she has left this house.

"Now, I ask you, mother, what does it mean?"

She saw that her son was in deadly earnest, and she went into tears, while she cried:

"Howland, my son, my love for you prompted me not to encourage her ambitious hopes, for what is she, who is she, but a nameless beggar?"

"Silence, mother! not one word, I say, against that girl: I took her from the waves, when she was drowning, and I pledged her dying mother that I would be a brother to her—"

"A brother, yes, my son, but you wished to make her your wife."

"True, and would have done so had she not refused my love."

"By heaven! but I believe you caused her to do so, for Dolores was no hypocrite, and up to yesterday certainly showed that she cared for me."

"But, Howland, I have other views for you,

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and I have already pledged you to Judge Ortelle for his daughter Ada."

Captain Howland Moncrief said something, *sotto voce*, that sounded very much like:

"D— Judge Ortelle and his daughter too."

But aloud he said:

"I am my own master, mother, and shall place my love where I please."

"You would have me marry a silly bundle of frills and false hair, paint and powder, because she is an heiress to millions, rather than a noble girl who is poor."

"But I choose otherwise, and I tell you frankly, as you have driven Dolores Moultrie from your home, I go also, to return only when you have brought her back."

The mother pleaded earnestly, but Howland Moncrief left the breakfast-room and the house, and half an hour after an expressman called with a note to his *valeet* to pack up his baggage and join him at a hotel.

In despair Mrs. Moncrief knew not what to do, for she dearly loved her son; he was the idol of her worship, and ordering her carriage she sought him at the hotel.

But he would not yield; said his leave of absence was about up and he would start West that night to join his regiment in Wyoming; but that when Dolores Moultrie was again in the Moncrief mansion he would return.

"But, Howland, what shall I say to Judge Ortelle and Ada?"

"Tell him to go to Jericho and take his brainless daughter with him," was the rude reply.

And thus the mother and son parted.

The son to go West to join his command in the Indian country; the mother to bury her ambitious hopes of trebling her son's already large fortune, and to set to work to find and bring back Dolores Moultrie to the home from which she had driven her.

CHAPTER IV.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

UPON the return of Mrs. Moncrief to her elegant, but now desolate home, she found awaiting her a gentleman whom she had met in society, and the very one whom she had selected for Dolores to marry.

He was a man of courtly manners, passed forty evidently, though he appeared younger, had a dark, intelligent face, and though a favorite in society, none seemed to know his antecedents, and his own word was taken for it that he was a Western cattle king, and possessed vast wealth.

Mrs. Moncrief, a dashing widow herself, and an artist in making her fifty years seem but thirty-eight, had "set her cap" for this stranger, Mercer Aldrich.

But he was not to be caught, the widow soon saw, by any one on the shady side of forty, his penchant being for young girls of twenty and under.

Failing in her own matrimonial scheme, Mrs. Moncrief masked her batteries and opened on him for her "darling niece" as she called Dolores, and as she led people to believe she really was.

This bait Mercer Aldrich eagerly caught at, for, from the very first he had seemed strangely drawn toward the young and beautiful girl.

As she swept into the parlor, after her return from the unpleasant parting with her son, Mercer Aldrich saw that she had had something to worry her, and, in his courtly way, bade her tell him if he could serve her.

Impulsive always, Mrs. Moncrief told him that Dolores had left the house, and gave as a cause that she had been persecuted by Howland in his attentions, and not loving him, had fled to escape from him.

"Now, my dear Mr. Aldrich, my son has gone, thinking I am to blame, and I do hope you will find Dolores," she said, entreatingly.

"Willingly, madam, and upon condition that I may claim the right of you to make your niece my wife," was the calm reply.

"And I give that permission, sir, for already I believe that Dolores loves you."

The man seemed pleased, and promising to at once strike the trail of the fugitive he took his departure.

But days passed away and no tidings came of the missing Dolores, or of Mercer Aldrich, and Mrs. Moncrief had almost begun to despair.

Not that she wished Dolores back again; only if she could prove to her son that the maiden did not love him, and had really loved another and married him, then Howland would no

longer blame her, and become a willing tool in her hands to dispose of to Ada Ortelle.

"Dolores has but a few dollars, and all her jewels and presents, given her by Howland, she left, so if Mr. Aldrich can only find her in poverty, be good to her, and ask her to marry him, she will do it through spite."

Such was the argument of the ambitious woman.

One day she received a letter from Mercer Aldrich, and it read as follows:

"MY ESTEEMED MADAM MONCRIEF:

"I have at last to report to you that I have struck the true trail.

"After leaving your home, Miss Moultrie was robbed in the ears of her pocket-book, and had to dispose of some article of jewelry, or dress, to enable her to advertise for a position as governess.

"An answer readily came, and she started West with a gentleman and his daughter, a maiden of fifteen.

"They go to some frontier fort, where the gentleman has an Indian Agency.

"I will follow, and I pledge you that before very long, you shall hear that Dolores Moultrie is Dolores Aldrich.

"I will write you again.

"Wishing you health and happiness, ever devotedly,

Yours,

"MERCER ALDRICH."

Hardly had Mrs. Moncrief finished reading this letter, and was congratulating herself upon its contents, when Benson the butler brought a card in, and said:

"He's in the parlor, m'am, and he's pretty enough to be a girl."

Mrs. Moncrief took the card and read:

"ARNOLD AUBREY,

"COLORADO."

"Who is he, Benson?"

"Dunno, m'am; but he's pritty as a picture."

Mrs. Moncrief swept into the parlor with the air of one who meant to awe Arnold Aubrey of Colorado.

But her dignity and elegance did not have that effect, for the person answering to that name calmly arose from the most luxurious seat in the parlor, and said in the coolest tones:

"Good-morning, madam; I am on the track of a villain of whose whereabouts you can perhaps inform me."

"Sir!"

It was all the astonished woman could say, and she bent her gaze in anger upon the one who faced her.

What she saw was a youth, apparently not over nineteen years of age, and with a face so womanly in its beauty that she almost thought it was a young girl in disguise.

His hair fell in golden curls upon his shoulders, his eyes were dark blue, full of expression, and his other features perfect in formation.

His slender, graceful form was clad in a dark-blue velvet coat and vest, and a pair of black broadcloth pants, which were stuck in the top of handsome boots, upon the heels of which were gold spurs, and in his hand he held a gray sombrero with broad brim, while he wore kid gloves white and spotless.

Such a person seemed out of place in the very streets of the city, and who he was and what his business with her might be, Mrs. Moncrief could not comprehend.

Hearing her indignant exclamation at his words he said in his cool, polite, yet off-hand manner:

"My dear madam, do not get angry, for I am not accusing you of being the friend intentionally of a scoundrel, for I am convinced you do not know his character; but you must know that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing."

"To whom, sir, do you refer?" she said frigidly.

"Why, to Mercer Aldrich the Danite, madam."

The lady was shocked, for the fair-faced youth made a bold charge against the wealthy Cattle King.

"Mr. Aldrich a Danite?" she almost gasped.

"Surely, sir, you are not mistaken?"

"No more than I am in my intention to one day take his life," was the stern response from lips that did not look like they could threaten.

"Merciful Heaven! pray tell me what you mean, sir?"

"I mean, Mrs. Moncrief, that I have the honor of your son's acquaintance, and meeting him, as I came East, and telling him who I was seeking, he made me come to you and ask regarding Mr. Mercer Aldrich, who, from my description, he was confident was the Mormon captain known in Utah as John Leigh."

"No, no, Mr. Aldrich cannot be that wretch."

"He is most certainly, madam, for Mercer

Aldrich is one of his aliases, and I have been on his track a long time West, until I found he had come East to get proselytes to his Mormon creed.

"Will you kindly give me his address, madam?"

It was a terrible blow to Mrs. Moncrief to have to acknowledge, even to herself, that Mercer Aldrich was other than he represented himself, and she said coldly:

"Mr. Aldrich has gone West, sir, and there you had best seek him; but I warn you he is no man to be accused falsely of the crime you lay upon him."

"I know him, madam, and that he is one of the most cowardly devils that disgrace the western country."

"May I ask for his address in the city?"

Reluctantly Mrs. Moncrief gave it, and with a polite bow Mr. Arnold Aubrey bowed himself out, sprung into a waiting carriage and was driven rapidly away, leaving the mistress of the Moncrief mansion in no very amiable frame of mind.

CHAPTER V.

FRIEND OR FOE.

A BIVOUAC on the prairies, and on the overland trail to the far West, is the change of scene from the parlors of Mrs. Moncrief's elegant mansion.

A range of hills a few miles beyond, which the wagon train had hoped to reach by night, but failing to do so, had camped on the banks of a small stream, with its fringe of willows and cottonwoods, that wound its way across the level plain.

A semicircle of "prairie schooners," as the wagons are called on the western border, each end resting on the stream, the horses and mules lariated near by feeding upon the rich grass, and half a dozen camp-fires, with a score or more of people gathered around them, preparing their evening meal, formed a picturesque scene for the eye of an artist to fall upon.

Suddenly the quick eye of the guide detected a dark object coming across the prairie, and then another, until five horsemen came in sight.

It was a locality where it was necessary for men to be on their guard against Indians and train robbers, and the little party were soon ready to meet friend or foe.

But a hail from the horseman in advance that they were friends, caused the answer from the captain of the train that they might come on.

A moment after they rode up and dismounted, and he who appeared to be the leader asked:

"Is this the wagon-train of Captain Harmon?"

"It is, sir, and I am Captain Harmon," said a kindly-faced, portly gentleman, stepping forward.

"My name is Aldrich, sir, and I believe you have an old friend of mine under your charge; Miss Dolores Moultrie, I refer to."

"Ah, yes; Miss Moultrie, here is a friend of yours," the gentleman called out, and then he added:

"You are welcome, sir, to my camp; Aldrich, you said your name was?"

"Yes, Captain Harmon; Mercer Aldrich, and I am a Colorado cattle man, who met Miss Dolores while visiting in the East."

Just then Dolores advanced, accompanied by a young and beautiful girl of fifteen; but in his changed attire in the city, to his border costume, handsome though it was, she did not at first recognize him.

"Why, Miss Dolores, have you forgotten an old friend?" he asked, reproachfully.

"Mr. Aldrich!"

"Yes, at your service, Miss Dolores."

She extended her hand, for though she did not like the man, she was glad to meet, far out on the plains, one whom she had met in the home around which still clung so many kind remembrances.

After greeting him, she said, pleasantly:

"Captain Harmon, this is an old friend whom I met in the city, Mr. Mercer Aldrich, though I believe he lives out here."

"Yes, Miss Dolores, in Colorado; I had gone home, but receiving a letter from your aunt that you were going West with Captain Harmon's train, I determined to seek you, so, with my cowboys here, sought to head you off."

"And how did my aunt, that is, Mrs. Mon-

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crief, know that I had come West?" asked Dolores, coldly.

"Oh! she would not lose sight of you, and was anxious to know how you were getting along."

"I believe you are a governess to the captain's daughter?" and Mercer Aldrich gazed admiringly upon the little beauty, Hortense Harmon, who, with her father, had walked back to the fire, leaving Dolores to entertain her visitor.

"Yes, and my pupil is as lovely in character as she is in face, and I feel that I can be happy out here."

"I hope so," said the man, earnestly, and being called to supper, while his cowboys looked after his and their horses, he joined the captain's men around the camp-fire.

A man of brilliant conversational powers, Mercer Aldrich soon charmed all by his anecdotes, and witty stories, and after supper was over, took up Hortense Harmon's guitar and sung for them in a voice full of pathos, and even Dolores regretted when the hour for retiring came, for, though she had always shunned the man at home, there was in him such a change on the plains, and he being the only link present to connect her with the happy past, she felt drawn toward him as she never had before.

The next day he continued on the march with them, and the next, and he had quite won over every one in the train, excepting Dolores.

As for her, in the bright glare of daylight, she saw marks in his face that she did not like, and she felt confident that his genial, courtly manner was not natural to him, and she began to dread him.

One evening, several days after Mercer Aldrich had joined the train, there rode into camp a horseman.

He was splendidly mounted and thoroughly armed, and possessed a face and form that would attract attention among a thousand men.

A face that was strikingly handsome, resolute and perhaps reckless, a form over six feet, straight as an arrow, and clad in buckskin, and long dark hair falling far down below his shoulders, he was the very type of a prairie hero.

The guide of the train recognized him at a glance, and sung out in cheery tones:

"Boys, it are Buffalo Bill!"

Dismounting, he greeted the guide kindly, and was presented by him to Captain Harmon, to whom he said:

"Pardon my intruding on your camp, captain, but I am a Government Scout, and learning that a man answering to the description of John Leigh, the Danite, had lately joined your train, I ran in to have a look at him."

"You are welcome, Mr. Cody; but you have been misinformed, for no such person has joined us," answered Captain Harmon.

"I am glad to hear it, and must be wrong; but did not a party of horsemen join you lately?"

"Yes, sir; but they were known to us, one being in fact an old friend of a lady of our party, and the others his companions."

"Ah! that accounts for it, but let me urge, sir, that you double your guards from this on to Fort Bridger, which I believe is your destination, for dangers will lie thick in your trail."

"I thank you, Mr. Cody; but you will remain with us all night?"

"No, thank you, for I am bearing dispatches and must not tarry; but I will join you at supper."

A few moments after supper was announced and the handsome young scout was presented by Captain Harmon to Dolores and Hortense, and also to Mercer Aldrich.

"Buffalo Bill indeed I am glad to meet so famous a borderman," said Mercer Aldrich, as he grasped the scout's hand.

But, from the moment of meeting the ranchero, Buffalo Bill kept his eye upon him, striving to recall where they had met before, for the face of Aldrich seemed to come back to him like a troubled dream, and he muttered:

"I feel that I have met that man before, and under circumstances of an unpleasant nature."

"But where? where?"

"Bah! I must be mistaken, for he is, I believe the captain hunted, the acknowledged suitor of that handsome Miss Dolores, and

therefore must be all right, for she could not love a bad man."

And, as Buffalo Bill rode on his lonely trail across the prairies that night, the face of Mercer Aldrich the ranchero still haunted him; but not until days after did it flash upon him who he was.

Then he cried suddenly:

"By the Holy Rockies! that man is John Leigh."

"Fool! fool that I was not to know him, because he had cut his beard and hair off."

"I will at once— No, no, it is too late now for whatever devilment Leigh intended, it is already done," and with gloomy face Buffalo Bill continued on his way, for a dread of evil rested on his heart.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THREAT.

ONWARD toward the setting sun went the Harmon train, dragging its slow length along over prairie and hill toward its destination in the Territory of Deseret, now Utah, the land of the Mormon.

And each day did Mercer Aldrich linger with the train, evidently held there by the fascination of Dolores Moultrie's beautiful eyes; and each day he grew more in favor with all in the train.

His comrades, whom he called his cowboys, spoke of him as a noble-hearted man, and the wagon men guide and hunters of the train were willing to swear by him, while Captain Harmon also seemed greatly drawn toward him.

But with both Dolores and Hortense it was different, for both of them, without divulging their feelings the one to the other, seemed to fear the man, and the former constantly avoided him.

One night, when the train had gone into camp in a pleasant grove, Mercer Aldrich asked Dolores to walk with him to the summit of a hill near by and enjoying the sunset scene.

Fond of the beauties of nature, and with no ready excuse for not going, she arose and accompanied him, and in watching the fading glories of the setting sun, glancing upon mountains of gold, purple and crimson clouds, she was fully repaid for her walk.

But at last the rosy hues died away, and she said:

"Come, let us return now, Mr. Aldrich."

"One moment, Dolores, while you hear what I have to say," he said eagerly.

"But tell me while we retrace our way to camp," she urged.

"No, hear me now, and let me know my fate."

"While I believed that you cared for your cousin, or rather Captain Moncrief, for you have told me he was really no kindred of yours, and he loved you, in my belief, I breathed to you no word of my love; but now when I know that you are free to listen to me, I throw myself in entreaty at your feet, Dolores, pleading for one little word of love from you, one atom of hope to which I can cling and know that I am not to leave your side forever."

He ceased speaking and gazed earnestly into her face, awaiting reply.

She had stood, with her eyes bent on the western horizon, and not on her pleading lover, and her tiny boot tapping the earth with almost impatience.

Not once had she by word or gesture, interrupted his passionate appeal for her love, until he stood waiting her response.

Then in her soft voice she answered:

"Mr. Aldrich, believing that you mean what you say, I feel sorry to have to tell you that I can never love you, that our friendship, such as it has been, must end here forever."

"Ha! you love another then?" he said angrily.

"I do not acknowledge your right, sir, to question me," was the cold reply.

"But I take the right, Dolores Moultrie, and ask you if you love another."

Her face flushed with anger; but she replied haughtily:

"You should be content, sir, with the knowledge that I do not love you, and, if you do not permit me to pass you, and return to the camp, that I will even lose respect for you."

"By the God above! girl, you shall rue these words," he hissed.

"No threats, sir, for I have a protector in Captain Harmon."

"I fear not Captain Harmon, or any one else, Dolores Moultrie, and again I say to you that the woman who casts my love beneath her feet will rue it to her dying day."

He stood aside and permitted her to pass on to the camp.

Swiftly she went along, his words causing her real alarm, and had arrived within a short distance of the camp-fires, when she glanced back and saw him standing where she had left him, his form relieved against the sky.

And, as she looked, she heard a long, shrill whistle given.

Instantly there was a slight stir in the encampment, and a moment after four horsemen dashed by her, one leading an animal which, even in the twilight she recognized as the steed belonging to Mercer Aldrich.

"It was a signal from him, and his men are going to join him."

"Oh, Heaven! can that man really mean his threat against me?" she muttered, and quickly she ran on to camp, and dropped down beside Hortense, who wondered at the emotion of her beautiful governess.

CHAPTER VII.

SNAKES IN THE GRASS.

IT was a beautiful spot in which to camp, and both Dolores and Hortense who had ridden on ahead with Revolver Nick, the guide, flattered themselves upon having selected the prettiest encampment of the long and weary march.

Behind them towered lofty hills, at the base of which glided a crystal stream, and before them stretched away a plain, knee-deep in juicy grass for the stock.

Revolver Nick had argued that it:

"War a pretty place fer a meetin'-house, but no kinder place fer a camp as hed ter be guarded from enemies, both pale-face and red."

But his arguments were overruled and the train went into camp, the horses were lariated out on the plain, the guards placed, and long before midnight the sounds of music and laughter died away, and nothing broke the deep silence that darkness had cast upon the scene.

The guards leant half-asleep upon their rifles, the horses and mules had tired of feeding and had dropped down to rest, or stood drowsily with heads bent.

But one in the camp tossed uneasily, for somehow a presentiment of evil had been upon her ever since two weeks before she had heard the threat of Mercer Aldrich.

Strive as she would she could not drive his stern, sinister face from her mind, and something told her that he would meet her again.

Rising, because she was unable to sleep, she dressed herself and stepped out of the tent, and stood gazing upon the calm scene.

Soothed by its quietude she laughed at her fears, and was about to return to her tent, when a form startled her by gliding up to her side.

"Why, Hortense! how you startled me."

"Forgive me, Miss Dolores, but I could not sleep; I have a weight on my heart, and seeing you come out, I dressed myself and followed you."

"I too have that feeling, Hortense, a feeling of coming evil; but see, are not those men coming yonder through the long grass?"

She pointed quickly out upon the plain, and Hortense saw the dark forms too, and said:

"There is a guard stationed just there, I think, and they must be some of our people, and—"

She never finished her sentence, for there came a flash off on the plain, a cry of pain, and up from the grass-covered prairie sprung a hundred forms, and wild war-whoops echoed back from the hillside, as they dashed upon the surprised camp.

Clasped in each other's arms the maidens shrunk back for shelter behind a huge tree, while around them waged the fierce battle, for the train men knew they fought for their lives.

And thus crouching, more dead than alive, they saw Revolver Nick fall, fighting bravely against a score of painted savages; then came a cry that Hortense knew too well came from her father's lips; a cry of pleading, not for himself, but for his child, and a pistol-shot was the answer.

And thus it went on, the fight surging away from them toward the wagons, and they gave up all hope.

The Doomed Dozen.

But suddenly up to them dashed a slender form, and he held in his arms a bundle, while he said quickly:

"Come, throw these Indian toggeries around you and come with me."

"Hasten, or all will be lost."

They were paralyzed with fear and did not move, and instantly he threw a blanket over the shoulders of each and a head-dress of feathers on them, and said, earnestly:

"Come, for God's sake, for these are not Indians, but John Leigh's Danites, and your fate will be worse than death."

"Come!"

His words sent a chill of horror through them, but roused them to action, and, springing to their feet, they quickly followed him toward the shelter of the hills.

"My father! oh, my father!" cried Hortense, pausing in an agony of grief.

"Died like the brave man he was; but come, for they'll not kill you."

There was a significance in his tones they could not fail to understand, and they darted along by his side with a speed they did not believe themselves capable of, and each moment the rattle of firearms and cries of combatants grew fainter and fainter in the distance.

At last their strange leader paused for a moment and listened.

All was silent behind them, and he said sadly, and yet with triumph in his tones:

"Those snakes in the grass have finished their red work, but you two, who were their intended victims, have escaped them."

"But come, for you are not yet safe."

And once more they continued their rapid flight.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FLIGHT.

"HERE we halt," and the unknown guide of the two maidens, and whom they had trusted themselves to without the slightest doubt of him or fear that he might be one of their foes, stopped in a small canyon.

It was dark there, for the foliage of overhanging trees kept even the starlight from penetrating the spot; but their guide bade them remain quiet an instant, and disappeared from their side as silently and mysteriously as he had approached them in the camp.

Several minutes, which seemed more like hours to them, passed away, and he did not return.

What could it mean?

Who was he?

Certainly not one of the train men, for both maidens knew all of them well.

Had he led them there to the better get them in their power?

In their grief at the fearful massacre, which still was before their eyes in all its horrors, they were almost crazed, and knew not what to do.

But Dolores at last said, calmly:

"Cheer up, Hortense, for if it comes to the worst, I have this."

"It is a pistol," whispered Hortense.

"Yes, one which once saved the life of Captain Moncrief, and he gave it to me, and it may serve us both."

"But how, Miss Dolores?"

"If I see that there is no hope, Hortense, I will kill you and then send a bullet through my own heart."

The young girl shuddered, but made no reply, for death then seemed to her less terrible than life."

"Come, my horse is ready."

It was the voice of their strange preserver and he was by their side when they believed him nowhere near them.

Silently they followed him through the canyon until they came into a valley.

Here stood a fine large horse, who gave a low neigh at the sight of his master.

"One of you must ride behind the other," said their guide.

"And you, sir?" asked Dolores.

"Oh! I am used to trotting over the mountains, and will go on foot; but Comrade will carry you both with ease."

With a strength that surprised the maidens he raised them to seats upon the back of his patient horse, Dolores being in the saddle, and at once set off on a rapid walk down the valley, the animal following like a faithful dog.

All through the night he kept up his untiring pace, over hills, along valleys, and across plains, until the daylight dawned, and the

maidens saw before them a broad, swiftly running stream.

But, without hesitation, their guide plunged in and, holding his belt above his head, swam to the other shore, followed by his horse.

Still keeping on, he held his way up into the mountains, until he halted before a rocky cavern.

"Here we can rest for awhile," he said, and he lifted the tired maidens to the ground.

But in spite of their grief and fatigue they gazed upon him with unfeigned admiration, for in years, now that they saw him in the daylight, he seemed but a youth; in fact, it was the same young man that had called upon Mrs. Moncrief in her city mansion, and denounced Mercer Aldrich; but now his dandy costume had been changed for a hunter's suit, far more fitting the wild life he was leading.

He saw their earnest gaze, and, as if to put them at their ease, and pitying them in their grief and helplessness, he said, softly:

"You can rest here without fear, while I look up some breakfast, for you look tired and hungry."

"No, no, I am not hungry, I am not tired, I am broken-hearted, for my poor, dear father is dead," groaned Hortense.

"It was all that villain Leigh's work, and I wish I could have overtaken you a little sooner; but I could not, and only got there as they made the attack."

"I saw you two hide by the tree and determined to save you, and only wish I could have saved your father, miss; now, lie down on my blanket and rest."

He spread his blankets upon a bed of soft grass near, gave them a drink of water from his canteen, and, mounting his horse, rode away in search of game for breakfast.

But ill-fortune seemed to dog his steps, and it was long before he could kill a deer and retrace his way to the little cavern in the mountains.

At last he reached there to find no trace of the maidens.

He hailed, and no response came, and, dismounting, he picked up his blankets, which lay just as he had placed them.

Throwing them across his saddle, again he called aloud.

This time there came an answer, for a bullet whizzed by his head, and half a dozen forms darted out of the cavern upon him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DANITES.

THE sun had soared to quite a height above the horizon, the morning after the attack upon the encampment, as a horseman rode along at a rapid pace, following the trail left by the wagon-train.

One glance at his horse was sufficient to show that he had been urged hard, and upon the rider's face was a look of anxiety, and he constantly kept his gaze fixed upon the trail far ahead of him.

It was Buffalo Bill, the scout, who was thus following the track left by the train, and, having delivered his dispatches at the fort, for which he was destined, when he first came upon the party under Captain Harmon, he had determined to head them off ere they could cross the Green river, and warn them of the danger they would meet by following the direct course to their destination.

He had crossed their trail as he had expected he would, and pressed on at a hard pace, even for the splendid horse he rode, and knew that ere long he must soon come in sight of the white tilts of the wagons.

But instead he saw a smoke rising from the timber in his front, and cautiously he approached, to suddenly rein his horse back, while a cry of horror broke from his lips.

"Too late! too late!"

The cry seemed wrung from him by mortal grief, and springing to the ground he stood with uncovered head upon the spot, gazing spellbound upon the fearful, sickening scene.

And the sight that met his gaze was fearful indeed, for the dead of the train lay about him, mutilated almost beyond recognition.

Here was Revolver Nick, his knife still grasped in his hand, and around him were others of the train.

There lay the body of Captain Harmon, and near him were several women of the train, the wives of emigrants, who had seemed to fly to him for a protection he could not give them.

Beyond, trainmen, emigrants and hunters lay thick, and all dead, with here and there a

woman, and now and then a child that had fallen before the merciless bullets and knives of their foes.

All had been rifled of their money and valuables, and many of their clothing, while the smoldering fires showed where the wagons had been burned, after being despoiled of all the murderous band could carry with them.

"Strange that not one dead man of the attacking party can be seen," muttered Buffalo Bill.

"This looks like Indian work, as does also the scalpless heads; and yet I don't believe it."

"I will see."

"Yes, here is a tomahawk, and here a bow, and this moccasin has come off a wounded foot."

"All Indian signs, especially carrying off their dead; but paint and feathers don't make red skins."

So saying Buffalo Bill looked around until he found the trail leading away from the fatal encampment, and a low call brought his horse to his side, while he muttered:

"Ironheart, there are two that I do not find here, old fellow."

The horse gave a low neigh, as though understanding what was said, and Buffalo Bill continued:

"Those two not being here are alive, and it will be better to look after the living than tarry here to bury the dead, so we will jog along, Ironheart."

The scout then threw himself into his saddle, and the rest having refreshed his horse he set off at a quick pace along the trail left by the murdering band.

"They came across the prairie, and retreated this way after their hellish work."

"Oh Heaven! but a fearful retribution shall follow this red deed," and Buffalo Bill's face was white and stern.

Suddenly he drew rein, for his experienced eye had detected some sign.

"Ah! here is where they branched off to bury their dead, and they have covered up their tracks well; but I shall soon see what secret the grave will tell."

With an instinct that was remarkable he followed the faint trail, and soon halted by a spot where his scout's eye told him the ground had been disturbed.

Leaves, blown from the forest lay about in piles, as though left there by the winds; but beneath those was soft earth, and Buffalo Bill's knife soon manufactured for him a wooden shovel which quickly threw out the dirt.

It was not a long task, as he worked unceasingly, and a body was soon revealed.

"In full war paint and feathers, but a pale-face," he muttered, as he rubbed the dusky cheek of the dead.

"And another, and another; well, the train made a good fight of it, and rid the earth of a few of these devils."

"But alas! they went under at last."

"Yes, they are all white men, not one red-skin here, and, as I thought and feared, they are Danites."

"Now, to the rescue of those two whom they have spared to make Mormons of them."

With a muttered curse he again sprung upon his horse, and once more followed the trail.

But soon it branched off, the main force going to the right and a smaller one to the left.

An instant did Buffalo Bill hesitate and then he made up his mind which course to pursue and he followed the smaller trail.

It led him down the valley and then up into the hills again, and he was about to give his horse rest before attempting the climb, when he heard ringing shots not far away, and with the speed of the wind he rode in the direction from whence came the sound.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNEXPECTED ALLY.

WHEN the men in the cave dashed out suddenly upon the youth who had saved Dolores and Hortense from the massacre of the train people, only to have them fall into the power of the party who had so swiftly trailed him, they expected to see him surrender to them, and at least thought they held him at their mercy.

But with a cry to Comrade, that sent him spinning around, as though on a pivot, the youth drew a revolver in each hand, and merrily they rattled forth deadly music to his assailants.

He saw rushing upon him six or more men

who looked like Indian warriors, for they were so rigged out and painted hideously; but well he knew that white faces and black hearts lay beneath the red paint, and his every shot was sent with an unerring aim that showed he meant to give no mercy, and ask none.

But seeing that his foes, after several of their number had fallen, quickly retreated back into the shelter of the dark cavern, he gave a cry to Comrade, and with a bound the splendid animal began a rapid flight, while shot after shot rattled harmlessly after him.

But ere he had gone a hundred yards the youth suddenly reined up, for before him he saw a horseman coming rapidly toward him.

It was Buffalo Bill, and the two came to a dead halt, and each with a revolver leveled, sat regarding the other.

"Well, who in the name of the Rockies are you?" asked the scout, gazing upon the handsome youth, as he coolly sat on his horse, his revolver thrown forward and a quiet smile upon his lips.

"Up in the mining country the boys call me Satan's Pet."

"May I ask your handle, pard?"

The reply was so cool, the manner of the youth, whom Buffalo Bill felt certain had just escaped from some dread danger, was so indifferent, that the scout laughed lightly and replied:

"On the prairies I am known as Buffalo Bill."

"Buffalo Bill! put it there, pard, for I have heard of you North, South, East and West," and the youth lowered his revolver and rode forward, with extended hand, while he added:

"And rumor don't lie in saying you are the handsomest man that ever put on a buckskin suit."

Bill flushed at the unexpected compliment, and said pleasantly, as he grasped the extended hand:

"And I have heard of you too, little pard, and now I look you squarely in the face I guess neither your friends or foes have lied about you."

"Friends I have none, and as for foes, all men seem foes to me," said the youth, while a look of deepest sadness came into his beautiful eyes.

"Don't say that after this, pard, for I am your friend; but what's the trouble up the canyon?"

"Trouble enough; John Leigh's Danites butchered a train, and though I saved two of its members, and left them up at a cavern in the hills, while I looked up game, I came back to find them in the hands of those devils, and they nearly got me too, and I know they want me."

"Doubtless, from what I have heard of your trailing the Danites."

"I have had cause," was the sad reply.

"Who were the two you saved?"

"Two young ladies."

"Ah! the captain's daughter and her governess?"

"Yes."

"Well, the party that have them is not large, so let us return and see what we can do to rescue them; but I should have thought you would not have left them?"

"I could not help it, for I had only Comrade here to carry them both, and traveling all night, felt certain I had gained some seven hours' start, and could rest for five; but they followed me rapidly, and how at night I can not understand, for I covered my trail as well as I could."

"I can tell you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, they had bloodhounds, for I saw their track."

"By Heaven! that is it then; as soon as they missed the maidens they struck out after them."

"What are those ladies to you, may I ask?"

"Nothing."

"Then why did you serve them?"

"To serve myself, for I learned that Leigh was organizing his band, and felt he would attack the train, and he was the one I wanted, and if I could join the emigrants, I knew that was my best chance to meet him; but I was too late, and seeing the maidens saved them."

"Had you joined the train before you might have been massacred."

"True, but not until I had killed John Leigh the Danite leader," and the youth spoke with a savage earnestness that told the scout how deep was his hatred for the man."

"Come, let us go back up the canyon and see what can be done, and we'll doubtless sur-

prise those fellows, as they'll think I'm scared off for good," and the youth laughed lightly.

"I am your ally, little pard, so lead on," was the pleasant remark of Buffalo Bill, and side by side they went back up the canyon toward the cavern.

CHAPTER XI.

CAUGHT IN THEIR OWN TRAP.

WHEN the two allies arrived in sight of the entrance to the cavern they saw that the escape of Satan's Pet, as he said he was called in the mines, had created an excitement that had not subsided.

White men painted as savages were bending over fallen comrades, shot down by the daring youth, and three were preparing to mount horses led out of the cavern, as though to go in pursuit of the enemy who had dealt them such severe blows.

"I'll tell you what you do, sir; open on them with your rifle and run them back into the cave, and they'll think I have returned, for they did not notice I carry only revolvers, I am certain," said Pet, addressing Buffalo Bill.

"A good idea, and we can keep them besieged there until night, and then, as they come out, follow and make a dash to rescue the young ladies."

"We need not wait until night, for yonder cave is one of my haunts in these mountains, and there is another entrance which they do not suspect, and I will go there and see if I cannot steal the girls out."

"I hate to have you go alone."

"I am generally alone; I told you I had no friends, and besides, you must stay here and keep them in the cave."

"Now let them know they are not forgotten."

Buffalo Bill raised his Colt's repeating rifle* and with the flash a man fell dead in front of the cavern entrance.

Back, pell-mell into the cave went horses and riders, and only the slain were left without.

A boyish laugh broke from the lips of the youth at the sudden stampede of his foes, and he cried gayly:

"That's the music; just sing them the same song each time they appear, and I'll be back in an hour or so."

He left his horse lariated out with that of the scout's, and hastily disappeared in a canyon that led further into the hills, while Buffalo Bill, protected by the boulder, kept his eye fixed upon the cavern.

Once he caught sight of a form moving far back in the shadows of the cave, and instantly his eye ran along the sights and his finger touched the trigger.

A smothered cry followed the shot, and the scout knew that his aim had been true.

At last he came to the conclusion that the occupants of the cavern were preparing some surprise for him.

He could hear their horses moving about on the rock flooring, and their voices were echoed back to him in earnest conversation.

Presently, out of the cavern, riding in a group, dashed six horsemen at full speed.

Then Buffalo knew that their plan was to charge upon him *en masse*, each man trusting to luck not to be the one who got the rifle-shot, and feeling confident that their weapons at close quarters could quickly put the youth to flight, for it was evident that they believed that their foe guarding the cave was none other.

But they had not taken into consideration the deadly aim of Buffalo Bill.

Hardly had their horses given half a dozen bounds before they saw their mistake, for one man and two steeds had gone down under the scout's fire, and a fourth shot broke the arm of a second rider.

A narrow canyon, with steep sides led to the shelf upon which the cave opened, and feeling that it was safer to retrace their way to the cavern, than keep on for a hundred yards under that fatal fire, they drew rein to go to the right about.

But during the temporary check the unerring rifle poured in its fire, and in wild terror they started back to their retreat.

But suddenly the three men left, reined back their horses with cries of terror, for out of the cavern bounded a slender form, a revolver in each hand, and instantly he opened upon them.

With horror they beheld the very one they believed had been firing upon them from over the boulder, and, as another horse went down beneath his aim, they darted to the steep side of the canyon, and deserting their animals, clambered up the embankment.

But Satan's Pet was determined not to let them escape so easily and sent another shot after them which brought a man tumbling back into the canyon, just as Buffalo Bill came dashing up toward the youth, who cried out in his cheery tones:

"Four from six leave two."

"Well, what discovery did you make in the cavern, Pet, for I see that you did indeed flank the devils?"

"Yes, but the girls are not there."

"Not there?"

"No, they did not come with this party, but kept on with the larger force, contrary to what we thought; but I don't give up their trail."

"Nor I; but have you searched the cavern well?"

"Oh yes; they found the girls asleep doubtless, and sent them on after the main force under Leigh, while eight remained to capture me on my return."

"Well, they didn't do it, for six of the eight are now only coyote meat; now what do you say do?"

"Report to the commandant of Fort Bridger that the Danites have two maidens captive, and have doubtless carried them on to Salt City, and that they have massacred all the train people."

"No, there are not troops enough at Fort Bridger to do us any good, and, though we know that these fellows are all whites in Indian garb and paint, we must be certain who their commander is, so we will go to Salt Lake City if you say so."

"It would be taking great risks."

"True, but I have been there often before, and we can do more to save the girls than an army can."

"I am ready, little pard."

"Good! then we will play Injun too, but your handsome mustache will have to come off."

"I care not; tell me your idea?"

"I know a weed that will make big Injuns of us, as far as skin goes, and we can rig up suits out of these, and I speak the Ute tongue like a native."

"And so do I."

"Then to Salt Lake we go as renegade Utes," was the determined reply of Satan's Pet.

CHAPTER XII.

HOPE AND DESPAIR.

Utterly prostrated with grief and fatigue both Dolores and Hortense at last sunk into deep slumber, lying upon the blankets spread for them by the youth who had so cleverly rescued them from the camp during the massacre.

How long they were unconscious in dreamless slumber, they knew not; but they awoke with a start, to behold bending over them a tall form, with painted face and feather head-dress, while near by were full a dozen horsemen.

At once they gave themselves up for lost, and clung to each other with the energy of despair, while Hortense said pleadingly:

"Spare us."

"You are in no danger, for if I were to harm a hair of your head, it would be the worse for me," was the reply of the pretended savage in perfect English.

"Oh, sir, you are not then an Indian and you will be merciful," cried Hortense.

"Certainly, miss; I was seeking you, for the chief knew that you had escaped the—well, from the encampment, and I bad orders to find you and carry you to him."

"Who is your chief?" coldly asked Dolores.

"It must remain a secret until you see him, miss; but who, may I ask, brought you here?"

"That too must remain a secret, sir," was the calm reply of Dolores.

"As you please, miss; but we shall soon know."

"Come, you must go with me, and I advise you to give us no trouble."

"We will go, for we are in your power. Come, Hortense, keep up a brave heart, for the end has not yet come."

Cheered by the example of Dolores, the younger maiden wiped her eyes, conquered her emotion, and said calmly:

* At that time the only repeating rifle in use.

"I am ready."

At a motion of the man who appeared to be the leader two horses were brought forward and the saddles arranged for them, and telling the greater part of his followers to remain in the cavern, and "Capture that fellow, whoever he may be, and take him alive too," he mounted his own horse, and placing himself between the maidens he rode away from the cavern.

Having reached the regular trail, by which the force under the chief had gone, he sent a messenger on ahead to report his capture of the maidens, and then rode on in perfect silence, refusing to answer any of the questions put to him by Dolores.

At length the messenger returned and said to the leader something in an unknown tongue, and once more the party went on in silence.

At night they went into camp in a pleasant spot, and a rustic arbor was built for the fair captives and every attention was shown them; but a silence was kept which none of the Danites, as the maidens knew them to be, would break.

Early the following morning they again resumed their march, and the shadows of night were again upon them when they came in sight of the glimmering lights of Salt Lake City.

As they passed into the town all hope seemed to forsake Hortense; but Dolores felt a ray of hope which she could not account for, and said quietly:

"Hortense, before the massacre, I had a presentiment of evil, and it came upon us most cruelly; now I feel a hopefulness that I trust will bring succor to us."

"But who will know our fate, now that that youth is dead?" sighed Hortense.

"I am not certain he is dead."

"But they remained there to kill him."

"True, yet I do not believe that he was caught in their trap, and I intend to hope and not give up to despair, and you must do the same."

"I will try: but oh! how fearful to be in this hateful city."

"It might be worse, Hortense. Ah! we are stopping here, and if this house is to be our quarters, they certainly will be pleasant."

The party of horsemen had now turned into a yard and drawn rein at the door of a comfortable house.

Lights gleamed from the windows, and several servants were visible, as though expecting the arrival of visitors.

Lifted from their saddles by the man who had captured them, for they were too fatigued to spring to the ground, though they hated to have him touch them, they were ushered into a large, pleasantly furnished room, where a table was spread for tea.

Adjoining it was a bedroom in which, to their utter amazement they found their trunks of clothing which had been with the train.

"Young ladies, the chief assigns you these quarters, and he hopes you will be comfortable.

"The servants will supply your wants, but will also be your guards, so that escape will be impossible.

"After you have rested for a day or two, the chief begs me to say that he will visit you," and the man, still in the Indian garb and paint, was bowing himself out of the room, when Dolores again asked:

"And who is this chief?"

"Lady, I only obey orders given me, and have received none to tell you who he is," was the polite reply, and the maidens were left to themselves and their grief, alone, friendless, and wretched in the home of the Mormons.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MASKED VISITOR.

SEVERAL days passed away, and no change came to the captives in their Mormon prison, for the house was nothing else.

They were made most comfortable, the servants being most attentive, and the table was well supplied; but the hearts of the maidens were full of grief, and they dreaded the coming of every day, the setting of every sun.

Poor Captain Harmon had expected a happy life upon the border, and, a man of some means he had loaded his train down with all that he would need in his new home to add to the comfort of himself and daughter.

A widower, he had only Hortense to love, and to advance her education, he had advertised for a competent governess to take charge

of his daughter, and Dolores Moultrie had been the applicant, and from the first the captain and Hortense had been drawn toward her with the deepest affection.

And how had the end come?

Back in the hills lay the massacred people of the train, and in the heart of the Mormon city were the daughter and governess, and no one to aid them.

The unknown fate of the youth who had come to their aid on that fearful night was also a cause of grief, and altogether the lonely girls had only sorrow to hug to their hearts.

Upon the evening of the fourth day of their captivity, Dolores and Hortense sat in their room, talking over for the hundredth time their hopes and their fears.

Suddenly the door opened and the servant woman entered.

Hers was a cold, emotionless face, and they had never liked her, and Dolores said impatiently:

"Well, what is it?"

"The chief begs to see Miss Moultrie alone," was the response.

Dolores turned pale, but remained perfectly calm, and said:

"Now, Hortense, we will know what is to be our fate."

"Do not leave me long," pleaded the young girl.

"I will not; but if you hear me call come to me."

She passed into the next room with all the dignity she could assume, and pausing near the door remained standing.

Upon the other side of the table stood a tall form, a cloak thrown around his shoulders, and clad from head to foot in deep black.

He wore his hat and his face was hidden by a black mask, and gloves of the same sable hue covered his hands.

"Miss Moultrie, I believe?" he said, in an inquiring, but polite tone.

"I am Dolores Moultrie, sir," was the cold reply.

"You were in the train, which the Indians attacked back in the foothills of the Escalante Mountains, I believe?"

"I was in the train, sir, which the Danites, your tools doubtless, disguised as Indians, attacked and cruelly put to death all but two of us," was the fearless reply.

"You are mistaken, Miss Moultrie, they were Indians," he said, hastily.

"I am not mistaken, sir, for I know a wolf's skin from a wolf."

"Ah! well, we'll not discuss that matter, other than to say that, knowing so much, you will doubtless see the necessity of our never allowing you to spread such a disagreeable story concerning the massacre where the United States soldiers can hear of it."

Dolores saw at once that she had made a sad mistake in making known that she knew the murderers of the Harmon train were not Indians, and she remained quiet, biting her lips to hide her chagrin.

The masked visitor seemed to read her thoughts, and continued:

"I have come, Miss Moultrie, to offer you a compromise out of your difficulty."

"There can be but one compromise, sir," was the haughty reply.

"And that is?"

"The release of my young friend and myself."

"But where can you go?"

"Anywhere, so it is away from this hated spot."

"The father of Miss Harmon is dead, and you, her governess, have no friends upon whom you can call for aid, so I beg you accept a compromise."

"Name it, sir."

"You are here among the Mormons, and—"

"Alas! I know that but too well."

"You will find the Mormons not so black as they are painted—"

"They could not be worse," was the fearless retort."

"You mistake them, for there are many noble men and women among them."

"Their creed differs from yours, but they are a God-fearing people, and there is one of their number who esteems you most highly."

"Ha! do I know any of them?"

"You do."

"His name?"

"First hear my proposition."

"He is rich, stands well in rank, and would make you his wife."

"Never!"

"Do not be hasty."

"I say never!"

"But you do not know to whom I refer."

"I care not, I will never so debase myself."

"It is better to be a Mormon's wife than the bride of Death," was the significant reply.

"I differ with you, sir."

"What! you would rather die than become a Mormon's bride?"

"Yes."

"You cannot mean it."

"I do, with all my heart."

"Perhaps your sweet young friend will not think as you do."

"Villain! would you break the heart of that poor child?"

"Oh, no! there is many a girl as pretty who has been glad to become a Mormon."

"She will not."

"I shall ask her."

With a bound Dolores reached the door between the two rooms, and looking the man firmly in the face, said, fiercely:

"Dare to intrude here, and I will send a bullet through your coward heart."

He laughed lightly and moved forward, but suddenly halted, for she drew from her pocket her trusty pistol and leveled it at his heart, while she cried in ringing tones:

"Come on, and you die!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MYSTERIOUS INTRUDERS.

THE bold attitude of Dolores Moultrie took the masked visitor all aback.

He halted with the promptness of a soldier on parade, and seemed very uneasy.

It was evident that he had not believed her armed, and a glance at the weapon showed that it was by no means a toy pistol, but one that would do deadly work.

Feeling his danger, and that it was not a pleasant position to be in, he determined to extricate himself as best he could, and said calmly:

"Very well; for the present you can have your own way, and I will decide your case, instead of that of your young friend."

"As you please, sir; you know that I consider death preferable to being bound by hatred ties to a Mormon, and Hortense feels as I do."

"But you will not be allowed to die."

"That we shall see."

"If you will become the wife of the one to whom I refer you shall be the queen of his household, and your life shall be made a happy one."

"Never!"

"Then a fate worse than death shall be yours, as I will sell you to the Ute chief for squaws."

The cruel words came out harsh and sneering, and Dolores grew sick at heart, and buried her face in her hands, momentarily forgetting herself.

And it was for her a fatal act, for, with the bound of a panther the masked visitor was by her side, and her pistol was wrenched from her grasp, while into her ears sunk the dismal words:

"Now, my beauty, you are in my power."

Maddened at her helplessness, she suddenly raised her hand and tore from his face the black mask.

Instantly the sinister face of Mercer Aldrich was revealed.

With a cry of horror Dolores started back, just as Hortense darted into the room, having heard the angry voice of the man as he sprung forward and seized the pistol.

"Mr. Aldrich!" cried the young girl in amazement.

"You too are in this hated place?"

"Hortense, that man is a traitor, and to him we owe all our misfortunes, for he is I now know, none other than John Leigh the Danite," and Dolores gazed upon the man before her with a look his eyes dare not meet.

"No, no, he cannot be what you say he is, Miss Dolores; he was so kind, so good, and poor papa liked him so much."

"Hortense, he was a snake in the grass when in our camp, and he is now our bitterest foe," was the fearless response.

"Are you what Dolores says?" asked Hortense, who found it hard to believe what he had heard.

"Miss Moultrie seems to know me, and I see no reason for denying further, and there-

fore tell her plainly, that I am the one she is to marry," was the calm, shameless reply.

"By my own hand will I die first."

"I have heard those threats before, Miss Moultrie, and those who made them thought better of them afterwards."

"I will leave you now; but the third night from this I will return and carry you to the Endowment Home to become my wife."

Without another word he resumed his mask, yet why they could not then understand, and left the house, and Dolores and Hortense were again alone with their grief, the former seeming the more cast down, as she no longer had possession of her pistol with which to protect herself.

For some time they sat in sorrow, utterly silent, for they knew not what to say, and then the door opened and they were startled by seeing an Indian enter.

They feared that already had their trouble come upon them, and gave themselves up for lost; but the red-skin intruder said in broken English:

"Want see Dora; chief sent for her."

"For me?" gasped Dolores.

"No, wait squaw, Dora."

"Ah! he means the servant woman, Dora," said Hortense.

"Yes, is her here?"

"Yes, I am here," and the cold-faced woman came from the adjoining room.

"Chief send this," and the Indian held forth a slip of paper in his hand.

She stepped forward to take it, when with a panther-like spring he was upon her, his hand upon her throat, and in a tongue that was certainly not Indian, he cried:

"Here, miss, I do not wish to hurt her, so take this rope and tie her."

It was Dolores that he addressed, and, though startled at his sudden act she seemed to realize the situation, and with a skill and firmness that was remarkable, she quickly bound the woman's arms, while the supposed Indian held her in his firm grip.

"Now, a gag in her mouth to prevent music, and all will be well," was the quiet remark, and both maidens started, for they recognized the voice of the apparent Ute warrior.

"You are—"

"Sh—! don't speak names here, miss," said the man breaking in upon the words of Hortense.

Then he added:

"I am only an Injun; now, my ugly Mormon female guard, I guess you'll rest quiet for awhile."

As he spoke he raised the woman in his arms and carrying her into the adjoining room rolled her unceremoniously under the bed.

As he was about to return to the front chamber he beheld through the open door a tall form enter.

Instantly he darted back, and his hand sought his knife, for he recognized the visitor as a Mormon captain, and knew that his life was in danger were he seen there.

But that instant Hortense came into the room and said earnestly:

"Oh, sir, fly for a Mormon officer is here."

"So I saw just now," was the cool reply.

"But you will go?" she entreated.

"I came here to save you, and my ally and myself had our plans well laid, but with that fellow there it will be impossible to-night."

"Then go now and another time aid us, for knowing that we have friends near we will have hope to cheer us."

"I'll go, but you may rest assured that you have friends near; good-by."

She seized his outstretched hand, and asked earnestly:

"Pray tell me who you are?"

"That old hag under the bed has only her mouth, and not her ears stopped up, so it wouldn't be healthy for me to speak my name here, so I'll give you the handle my pards call me by."

"And that is—"

"Satan's Pet."

Hortense started, for that name she had often heard around the camp fire at night, connected with wild stories of border life and adventure which poor Revolver Nick and the train hunters had to tell.

But ere she could reply the strange visitor, with the stranger cognomen, glided from the room, and hastily she returned to the chamber in which she had left Dolores.

To her horror she found her gone. The room was without an occupant.

CHAPTER XV.

FAITH IN A FOE.

The stranger who had entered the room and startled the two maidens, causing Hortense to run quickly to warn the one who came to aid them, was a man of striking appearance.

He was tall, well-formed, dressed in a suit of black corduroy, the pants stuck in top of boots, and wearing a black sombrero encircled by a silver cord.

His face was beardless, resolute and handsome, though his dark eyes held in them an expression of recklessness.

"Pardon, lady," he said raising his sombrero from his head.

"But I come as a friend, not a foe."

"Alas! I look for no friends here, sir; but your voice seems familiar, though I recall not your face," said Dolores.

"I am the one who brought you here, Miss Moultrie, and I do not wonder, in my then disguise, that you do not remember me."

Dolores started back at his words, but he continued quickly:

"Miss Moultrie, I pledge you my honor—"

"A Danite's honor!"

"I wonder not at your sneer; but I pledge you my honor that I mean you well and have come to save you from our chief, Major Leigh."

"I thought you were his hireling."

"You are severe, Miss Moultrie; but I cannot blame you after all you have suffered; but I have come to serve you if you will only trust me."

There was an honesty in the man's tone that Dolores could not doubt.

She remembered he had been kind to them in bringing them to Salt Lake City, and his face was not a treacherous one, and she said:

"Alas! I know not what to say."

"Trust me, for you cannot be worse off than here."

"True, I will trust you."

"Then come with me."

"Whither?"

"If you fear, do not come."

"And Hortense?"

"Must remain."

"I will not leave her."

"You can return for her."

"No."

"Then I will leave you, and, in the power of John Leigh, I say may God have mercy upon you."

She was alarmed at his impressive words and cried:

"Where would you have me go?"

"To the home of the head chief."

"Ha! Why?"

"To escape John Leigh."

"One may be as evil as the other."

"Not toward you, Miss Moultrie."

"Why not toward me?"

"Trust me and you will find out."

"I will."

She threw around her a shawl and passed out of the door.

There she halted and asked:

"You pledge yourself that I shall not be separated from Hortense?"

"Yes, I give you my pledge that you may return within the hour."

"Enough, I will go with you."

He drew her shawl around her with a courtly manner that could not offend, and drawing her hand through his arm, led her out of the yard, just as poor Hortense came back into the room to find her gone, and in an agony of grief threw herself down upon the sofa.

Utterly worn out by her violent sobbing she at last sunk to sleep, but started up at a touch on her arm.

It was Dolores that stood before her white as a ghost, her hands cold and trembling, and her whole manner indicative of having passed through some terrible ordeal of mental excitement.

"Oh, Dolores! why did you leave me?" cried Hortense, springing up.

"I could not help it, child, and I went for your good and mine," was the reply in a voice that had lost its music.

"Well, Dolores?" asked the young girl.

"Do not ask me to-night: to-morrow I will tell you all, but not now, not now."

"And I have to tell you, Dolores, that the one who visited us in Indian costume was the youth who led us from the camp that fearful night."

"Ah! that then was his voice: now I recall it."

"Thank God he is safe."

"Yes, and he came to save us, and—"

"Hortense, where is that woman?" suddenly interrupted Dolores.

"In the other room, lying where Satan's Pet left her."

"Satan's Pet?"

"Yes, that is the name he gave me as his own."

"Strange; how often we have heard that name; but the woman, Hortense—"

She paused quickly, for the door opening into the yard slowly opened, and in stepped the same dark-faced visitor with whom Dolores had left the house a couple of hours before.

At sight of him her face again paled, and she asked, faltering:

"You here again?"

"She is."

"Then, as the door is ajar, she has doubtless seen me and heard what has passed, and I must carry her away with me."

"If asked regarding her, you need simply say that she left the house by that door."

There was a strange, grim smile upon the face of the speaker, and as he ceased speaking he gave a low call.

Almost instantly two men, heavily bearded and rough specimens of manhood, entered and saluted their officer.

"The woman lies in the other room; go and bring her here."

The two men silently obeyed, Dolores and Hortense looking on and wondering what new horror was to be brought before their eyes.

With the woman in their arms, her eyes wildly and fiercely glaring upon all in the room, the men returned, and stood waiting a second order from their officer.

"To doom with her!"

It was all he said, but the woman seemed to understand what was meant, as she writhed fearfully, and in vain tried to cry out as the men bore her away.

"There are some secrets that must not be known, Miss Moultrie, and the grave alone keeps them," he said, calmly.

"You would not—" began Dolores.

"You need have no fear of the woman now, and, if you are threatened by John Leigh, you know your escape. Good-evening, ladies."

He bowed politely and departed, and once more the maidens were alone, and Hortense cried, eagerly:

"Now, Dolores, we can escape from here, for that lynx-eyed woman has gone."

"Gone, and alas! to a sad fate I fear; but, Hortense, calm yourself, for we need not attempt to escape, as it would be useless; but go to sleep now, for we are safe."

"Safe!"

"Yes."

"What mean you, Dolores?"

"To-morrow you shall know all, but not to-night, not to-night."

CHAPTER XVI.

A STRANGE STORY.

WITH the sunlight of the following day some of the gloom passed away from the hearts of Dolores and Hortense.

The woman, Dora, had been asked for by the other servants; but they were told, and truthfully, that she had left the house, and more regarding her the maidens could not tell.

Word of her disappearance was at once sent to John Leigh, and he soon put in an appearance, but could elicit no other information from either Dolores or Hortense than they had given the servants.

Cursing her for a traitress, and with a threat to Dolores that he would keep his word at the appointed time, the Danite leader left the house, having placed another woman in the place of the one who had so mysteriously disappeared, and one who, judging from her almost savage face, would be a she-dragon to guard them, for not in a single feature was there an atom of goodness or heart.

"Why do you smile, Dolores, at the threats of that wretch?" asked Hortense, noticing the look upon the face of Dolores after the Danite had departed.

"I will tell you, Hortense, and to do so, must first make known why I left you last night," and, as though some painful memory

swept over her, called up by her words, Dolores turned deadly pale.

"Did you notice the man who came here last night?"

"No, indeed, for I darted out to keep that Indian, or rather Satan's Pet, for I know him by no other name, from coming back in here."

"Well, he was the one who captured us at the cavern, and brought us here, and his name is Elmo Vane, and he is a captain of one of the bands of Danites."

"He did not treat us unkindly, Dolores."

"No, for the man has some heart; but he acts from a motive in serving us."

"He will serve us then?"

"Yes."

"And you know his motive?"

"I do; but let me explain:

"He came here last night and urged me to accompany him, saying it was for my good.

"Strange to say I trusted him, and I went where he led me.

"It was to a large house in the principal part of town.

"We entered the garden, ascended a piazza noiselessly, and he bade me gaze into a room in which shone a bright light.

"Hidden by the foliage of the trees near by I obeyed, and I beheld a man of fine presence slowly walking to and fro, his hands clasped behind him.

"There was that in his face that made me feel I had seen him before, and I seemed fascinated in gazing upon him.

"But, strive as I might, I could not recall when and where I had seen him before, and yet each moment that I gazed upon him, his face looked more and more familiar.

"My companion, Captain Vane stood by in silence, and I seemed to forget his presence until presently he called me away.

"Silently I followed him to a rustic arbor in the garden, and then I asked him why he had brought me there?

"To see that man," was his reply.

"Who is he?"

"My chief."

"But who?"

"The chief of the Danite Legion."

"Ha! that man is then the wicked leader of the Danites?" I exclaimed.

"He is the head chief, and next to our prophet, but he is no wicked man at heart."

"He cannot be otherwise and be a Danite," I answered.

"Ah! Miss Moultrie, you do not know us all; you cannot read our thoughts, and know our hearts, to understand why we are what we are."

"He spoke so sadly, Hortense, that I almost pitied him, and said:

"I do not think you are vile at heart, or the chief whom we have just seen, for his is a noble face."

"True, and in many respects he is a noble man."

"But what motive had you in bringing me here to gaze unseen upon him?" I asked.

"Were you in trouble is he not a man you could appeal to for protection?"

"If he were other than he is—a Danite."

"I see I shall have to force you to appeal to him," he said, impatiently, and, after a pause continued:

"Miss Moultrie, do you remember your parents?"

"I started at the question, Hortense, and answered:

"Why do you ask, sir?"

"I will tell you why; some years ago the head chief whom you just saw, saved my life.

"I was crossing the plains, our train was attacked by Indians, and they in turn were attacked and defeated by Danites under our Prince, as we now call him.

"I was then but twenty, and the Prince took a fancy to me and that is how I became what I now am."

"Trusting me, the chief sent me East on a special mission of his own, and it was to find his wife and child."

"He had left them, it seems, infatuated by the Mormon creed, as many men have been, and, his wife refusing to follow him into the Mormon church, had also refused his support after he had deserted her."

"Finding that Mormonism was not all he had believed and hoped, he determined to secretly give it up, and to carry out this plan sent me to look up his wronged wife and child."

"Armed with their names, and knowing where they had lived, I sought them out to

find that the poor wife had taken her own and her child's life, driven to despair by her husband's desertion of them, for she had devotedly loved him.

"This sad news I brought back to him, and from that day the head chief became a changed man."

"He took the leadership of the Danite League, and seemed wholly imbibited with the world in general."

"One day ago I found out a secret, which I have not divulged to the chief."

"I picked up a leather case of letters, and in it I found that which I was determined to divulge to you."

"The letters were addressed to Major Leigh, and also to him under the name of Mercer Aldrich and other aliases."

"He had been sent on a proselyting tour to the States by the Prophet, and, knowing something of the head chief's history, had, while there, accidentally found that his daughter was not dead, having been saved at the time of her mother's suicide, and left to the care of her preserver."

"Knowing that the head chief is a man of vast wealth, and that he has no children here, and has received permission from the Prophet not to marry, Major Leigh determined to make this daughter of his leader his wife, and thereby get possession of the property he knew that she would possess, as soon as he brought her to Salt Lake."

"Failing to win her by fair means, he intends doing so by foul, and this is why I brought you here, Miss Moultrie, to claim the head chief's protection, which is justly your due, as *Mark Moultrie, the Danite chief, is your father!*"

CHAPTER XVII.

FRIENDS IN DISGUISE.

WHEN Dolores made the startling announcement to Hortense Harmon, that Moultrie the Danite chief was her father, the young girl seemed to be struck dumb with amazement.

But seeing how deeply distressed her friend was, she put her arms around her neck and said kindly:

"Don't care if he is, Dolores, for he does not know you are living, and he need never know it."

"Yes, Hortense, he must know it."

"What! will you tell him?"

"Yes."

"But why?"

"I will tell you why, my dear girl; this young Danite captain told me that the power of Major Leigh is fearful, and he wields an influence over the Danite League that can drive them to any evil."

"He is determined to make me marry him by Mormon law, and will then make our marriage known to my father, who will have to acknowledge him as a son, for the Prophet, who he says stands in awe of Leigh, would compel him to do so, even though he knew this wretch had forced me to marry him."

"Captain Vane has but half a dozen men in the League that he can depend upon as true to himself, and he says otherwise he would aid our escape from here, but that under the circumstances it would be worse than madness to attempt it."

"Oh, Dolores, how sad is our lot; my father dead, and yours—"

She paused, and her face colored; but Dolores bravely finished the sentence:

"And my father worse than dead, for he is Moultrie, the Danite."

Hortense sighed, and wiping away the tears that dimmed her eyes, Dolores continued:

"The captain, therefore, thinks it best for me to make myself known to my father—"

"But, can you prove that you are his daughter, Dolores?"

"What a little lawyer you are, Hortense; yes, for I have here with me his own miniature likeness he gave my mother, and a few other trinkets which that fiend, Leigh, saved from the flames; then I have changed but little since I was a child, in expression of face, and he would know me."

"And can he save you from this Major Leigh, whom you say is all-powerful?"

"Yes, for Leigh could not force me to marry him if I was under my father's care."

"And poor me, Dolores?"

"Don't think, Hortense, that I would desert you; if you cannot go with me, I will remain with you, and, if it comes to the worst, we can die together."

"Brave, good Dolores! I love you so much," and the affectionate girl again twined her arms around her neck.

Dolores kissed her affectionately, and continued:

"Of course I dare not make known to my father where I got my information regarding him, as it would compromise the Danite captain, and their law is that making known the secret of a superior, and breaking their oath to know no friendships, outside of their League, is punishable with death."

"I must, therefore, not let it be known that he told me; but he promised to send a messenger here to-night, who will secretly guide us to the head-quarters of my poor misguided father."

"But the she-dragon, who sleeps in our room?"

"He has prepared for her by giving me a small bottle of chloroform, which I can stupefy her with to-night."

"Good! and I don't care much if she never wakes up."

"Don't be wicked, Hortense."

"It's catching; it's in the air, Dolores."

"Well, to-night we go together from this place."

"And what then?"

"I will make myself known to my father; tell him we were taken captives when the train was attacked, and that Major Leigh wished me to become his wife, though I will not say that he knew who I was, or that he had ever seen me before, and with this secret held *in terrorem* over the Danite major, I may be able to escape his persecutions, until—"

"Until what, Dolores?"

"Until we can escape, for I shall never remain in this horrid place, had I ten thousand kindred who were Mormons."

"Nor I."

"And I will let my father think that I knew he was here, a Danite chief."

"And he will protect you, Dolores, you think?"

"Yes, Hortense, he will protect us, for a father, be he what he may, cannot be so vile as not to protect his child from a fate worse than death."

"God grant that he does; but what about our young friend, who has risked his life to come in here to rescue us, Dolores?"

"You mean Satan's Pet?" asked Dolores with a smile.

"Yes."

"He will know where we are, and, if he has formed a plan of escape for us, he can aid us there as well, if not better, than here."

"True, and I believe he is one to carry out what he undertakes, Dolores."

"He certainly looks it; but how strange that a youth with his wonderful face, for it is really beautiful, should lead the life he does!"

"Strange indeed, Dolores: there is some mystery in his life, I think."

"I feel sure that there is, Hortense. But see, yonder come two Indians that look strangely like those who captured us."

She pointed out of the window, and instantly her eyes fell upon the two warriors, Hortense said quickly, and in a low tone:

"Dolores, that is Satan's Pet! see, do you not recognize him now?"

"Yes, it is the same young Indian who paid us a visit last night."

"It is indeed; but who is his companion?"

"That I cannot tell; but he is a splendid looking man, be he white-face or Indian."

The two individuals referred to were in full Indian costume, and certainly looked like thorough Indians.

They came along the street with an indifferent air, it seemed; but as they drew near the house the maidens saw that their eyes were fixed intently upon them.

The larger of the two held his bow in his hand, and an arrow in rest, and suddenly, with a light pull upon the head of the missile he sent it with unerring aim into the sill beneath the window, where it stuck quivering in the wood.

Around the head of the arrow was a piece of paper closely wrapped, and in an instant it was in the hand of Hortense, while the missile was drawn out and bastily concealed.

The pretended Indians passed on, and eagerly the two maidens bent over the slip of paper, and their eyes devoured as they read.

Written in a bold hand was the following:

"The Danite means you harm, and to-night he will bear you away to his camp in the mountains."

"Be ready to fly with us, and have no fear."

This was all.

"Oh! what shall we do?" cried Hortense.

"If the messenger from the captain comes first, we will go with him to my father; if they come first, we will accompany them."

"It is but a lottery both ways, Hortense, and I cannot understand how these men can rescue us from the dangers with which we are surrounded."

Hortense sighed, and the two determined to bide their time and see what the night would bring forth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOPE.

WHETHER the Danite captain felt that what he did to save the maidens, must be done quickly, or the major would act, neither Dolores nor Hortense knew; but certain it was that his messenger came early, shortly after dark.

It had been agreed between the captain and Dolores that the messenger should come to the house and ask if Major Leigh was present, and this should be the signal for her to get rid of the woman and at once take her departure with Hortense, and they would find their guide awaiting them outside.

It was just after dark that such a personage appeared: a tall man, wearing his hair and beard long, and dressed in the uniform of the Danites.

The female guard was on the alert and met the man at the door, in answer to his knock.

"Well?" she said shortly.

"I are seekin' the majer; are he heur?" asked the man.

"You mean Major Leigh?"

"Yas, who else?"

"You gave no name," said the woman in a surly tone.

"Majers must be thick in these heur parts thet yer doesn't know who I means."

"He is not here."

"He rid down this heur way late this afternoon an' ther guard told me I were likely to find him heur, as this were his bird-cage fer gal kernaries."

"He is not here."

"So yer told me jist now."

"Look for him elsewhere."

"S'pose I has ter; good-night, says I, ter be perlite, tho' yer is as cross as a settin' hen."

The door was banged in the face of the man, and to soothe her ruffled temper Dolores called the woman over to her, and said kindly:

"Here is something I guess you do not often see out here?"

As she spoke she handed her a bottle of cologne.

"What is it?"

"Perfume."

"Oh, yes; no, I have not seen a bottle of cologne for many a long year."

"I have mostly forgotten how it smells."

"You may have it if you wish, for I have more."

"I can't be bribed, young woman," was the sharp reply, as the bottle was pushed aside.

"I meant not to bribe you, for I know that would be impossible."

"Take it, for I know you wish it."

"Thank you."

"And Hortense, get me that bottle of perfume, please, among my traps, and I will put some on the lady's handkerchief."

Hortense passed into the other room, and soon returned with a small bottle marked "perfume."

"It looks precious," said the woman.

"It is; just smell it and see how delicious it is."

The woman took a long breath and drew in the intoxicating scent, and then another, after which Dolores said with the utmost coolness:

"Give me your handkerchief, Hortense."

The young girl obeyed and received it back again with some of the perfume.

Then Dolores poured some upon her own handkerchief.

"It is sweet, isn't it?" said the woman and she inhaled another long breath of it.

"Yes, very; now let me have your handkerchief."

"It isn't very clean."

"Never mind, the effect will be the same," and, as if by accident she dropped the bottle, and the contents saturated the piece of soiled linen.

"Quick! don't lose the perfume of it," cried the maiden, and the woman held it to her nose.

But only for a moment, for her hand

dropped in her lap, and her head drooped forward.

But Dolores was not satisfied yet, and held the handkerchief a moment more to the nose of the woman, while she motioned to Hortense to quickly get their wraps and their bundles, which the young girl had hastily put together when she was pretending to find the perfume.

A moment after the two stepped out of the house into the darkness, and Dolores leaned an instant against a tree, while she said nervously:

"A moment more and I would have been under the influence of the chloroform, too; but the air revives me, so let us see where the guide is."

"I am here, Miss Moultrie."

Both maidens started back as a tall form glided up to them.

But they recognized the messenger who had pretended to be in search of Major Leigh, and Dolores said quickly:

"You come from Captain Vane?"

"I am Captain Elmo Vane, Miss Moultrie; I am glad my disguise was so perfect as to deceive you; but come, let us hasten, for Leigh may arrive at any moment, and I would hate to be compelled to take his life."

Dolores glanced at the speaker in surprise, and he continued in a low tone:

"Rather than see you again in John Leigh's power, I would kill him in his tracks, be the consequences what they might."

"Thank you," said Dolores softly, hardly knowing what to say, and she continued:

"Captain Vane, this is my fellow unfortunate, Miss Hortense Harmon."

The young Danite bowed politely and rapidly led the way along the road, having taken from the maidens their bundles.

All the way to the home of the Danite chief Dolores seemed nervous and sad, for she felt that a fearful ordeal was before her, as she would rather have her father dead than what he was.

At last the garden was reached, and, fully acquainted with the surroundings, the Danite captain led the way to the little arbor, and said:

"Miss Harmon and myself will await here until you call for her: then I will leave; but be certain not to speak of my being here:

"I shall not betray you, sir, and believe me I shall ever appreciate your kindness; farewell."

She held forth her hand, and grasping it warmly he said softly:

"We shall meet again, Miss Vane; especially shall we if you need a friend."

She was nearly uttering the words, "I hope not;" but the latter part of his speech checked them, and she merely bowed, and said:

"Hortense, I will soon call for you, and have some hope for your poor little heart."

"There is the door, Miss Moultrie; the one to the right of the window."

"Thank you, sir," and trembling like a frightened bird Dolores Moultrie went forward to the mansion to meet face to face the father who had deserted her mother and herself long years before, and had given up the creed of his people for the strange belief of the Mormon.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DANITE AND HIS DAUGHTER.

WITH limbs that barely supported her, Dolores ascended the steps to the piazza, and hesitated at the door, as she glanced in through the window.

There, as upon her former visit, she beheld the form of the Danite chief pacing the room, in the same meditative mood he had seemed in then.

She gazed upon his clear-cut features, stern mouth and deep-set eyes, and then upon his tall form, clothed in black, and said softly:

"Yes, he is indeed my father."

Twice she attempted to rap on the door, ere she found strength to do so, and then drawing a vail over her face, gave a sudden knock.

"Come in!" said a low deep voice.

She opened the door and the man had turned about and faced her.

He seemed surprised at the entrance of a woman, and bowed with courtly grace.

"I believe you are Colonel Moultrie the Danite chief?"

Her voice as she spoke was hardly audible, but he to whom her words were addressed heard them, for he answered:

"Yes, I am Moultrie the Danite; how can I serve you?"

"I have come to seek your protection."

"Indeed? from whom?"

"From one who persecutes me."

"Who are you, may I ask?"

"A poor, unfortunate girl who is friendless."

"Then you need a protector; but who is so vile as to persecute you?"

His tone was kind, though his manner was stern.

"One who holds high rank in your command."

"Ha! it is Leigh, I'll lay odds on it."

"It is Major Leigh."

"He is a bad man to oppose in his whims, for he is backed by the Prophet; but prove that he persecutes you and I will protect you."

"He wishes me to marry him."

"Ah! and you have your eye on some one else?"

"No, I do not expect ever to marry."

"Tell him so."

"I have."

"Refuse him decidedly."

"I have, but he means to force me into a marriage with him."

"He is capable of it; but has he any claim upon you?"

"None; I have, on the contrary, every reason to abhor and hate him."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, for he it was who attacked the train of which I was a member, and oh God! my heart sickens at the fearful massacre that followed."

"I have heard of this; the emigrants were opposed to our religion, and were forcing themselves into our valley to settle, and refused the warning given them, fired upon my men, and we had to protect ourselves."

"You have been misinformed."

"So it seems, for Major Leigh led me to believe, if I heard aright, that there was not one escaped, and I find you here."

"Yes, and there was one other."

"Ha!"

"A young girl, and we were brought here and have been occupants of Leigh's town house, until he got ready to force me into a marriage with him."

"By the Mormon Prophet! but he shall not do this."

"Oh sir, from my heart I thank you; but let me tell you that those emigrants did not intend to settle in Utah, but in Wyoming, in the vicinity of Fort Bridger, and they formed but one half the train; the others were government men, and train men, all under command of the newly appointed Indian agent, Captain Harmon."

"We were not warned off, received no admonition of attack, and the massacre left but two of us to tell the story."

"This is far different from Leigh's report of it."

"I tell you the truth of it, and, if the Danites meant to fight for their rights, why were they all painted and costumed like Indians?"

"Were they?" and the chief raised his eyebrows in surprise.

"To a man."

"This shall be looked to, and I shall give Major John Leigh to understand that I am the chief of the Danites, and he but my officer," was the stern response.

"And I will not be given up to him?"

"Upon my honor no!"

"Heaven I thank thee!" and advancing to within a few feet of the Danite, Dolores continued:

"Look in my face, sir, and see whom you have saved from that man's power."

She dropped her vail, and her beautiful face, now flushed with intense excitement, was revealed to him.

The light fell full upon her, revealing every feature, and her faultless form, and the man stared at her as though an apparition had suddenly arisen from the grave and stood before him.

At last, in husky tones, he cried:

"In the name of God, I implore you, tell me who you are?"

"Your daughter."

"No! no! no! that cannot be, for I have no daughter."

"You had one?"

"Yes, a wee little girl in the long, long ago; had she lived, she would have looked like you."

"I am your daughter."

"I tell you no, for she died; her poor mother,

whom I cruelly deserted for this accursed—no, no, I will not say that, for I am a Mormon, and once a Mormon, ever one.

"I left her, my beautiful young wife, and our little daughter, and in grief and despair she took her own life and the life of her child, and the sin lies on my hand and heart, and not hers.

"Yes, I am the guilty one."

"I tell you I am your daughter; my mother, your wife, sprung with me into the sea; she died and I was saved."

"No, no, no, that cannot be."

"I am your daughter, Dolores."

"Dolores! yes, that was her name."

"See, here is your miniature likeness I had round my neck on that fearful night my poor mother died."

She handed him a gold medallion in which was a painted likeness of himself.

"Great God! it is the one I gave to my poor child."

"But how came you by it?"

"Father, look at me, and tell me if I am not Dolores?"

"She was a child, and—"

"And that was years ago. I have grown to womanhood since, and tell me, do I not look as my mother did then?"

"Good God! yes, you are my child, my Dolores."

He drew her toward him passionately, but almost instantly sprung back, while he cried in bitter tones:

"But you, my pure, beautiful child, can but feel polluted by the touch of such a father."

"Father, hear me!"

"Had I found you cold of heart, as you are said to be, I would have almost hated you."

"Finding you sympathetic with my grief, though you knew me not, I was drawn toward you, and oh, I have so longed for a mother's and a father's love in all these long years."

Again he drew her to his broad breast, and, Danite leader though he was, Dolores Moultrie felt that in him she had one to love her and to protect her and poor Hortense, whom a moment after she called into the room, where her lone heart, too, was made glad by the welcome she received.

CHAPTER XX.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

MAJOR JOHN LEIGH was in a towering passion, and the half dozen men who rode up to the town-house with him, leading two horses with side saddles on them, were really frightened for their lives.

He had dismounted at the door of his dwelling in town, and which he had used as a prison for Dolores and Hortense, and to his rap on the door no answer came.

Pushing it open he beheld the female guard lying back in an easy-chair, apparently asleep.

One vigorous shake, and she fell to the floor.

Then his nose was made sensitive of a peculiar and overpowering fragrance filling the room, and he cried out savagely:

"She has been chloroformed, by the holy Prophet!"

Vigorously he shook the unconscious woman until he aroused her from her stupor, and she was fairly terrified when she beheld the livid, furious face peering down upon her.

"Fool! where are my captives?"

The woman glanced stupidly around her, but made no reply.

"Idiot! dol! where are those maidens I left for you to guard?" he shouted.

"Gone."

"Curse you, am I blind?"

"Where are they?"

"That is what I asked you, thou accursed hag of Satan."

The woman put her hands on her ears as if to shut out his profanity, but he dragged them rudely away, and asked, in ringing tones:

"How long have they been gone?"

"How long have I been under the influence of this drug?"

"It is now ten o'clock."

"Then they have not been long gone, for I relieved Matta in her watch."

"You had better have let her remain on duty, you silly fool, than allowed them to trick you so."

"It was the perfume."

"What perfume?"

"They gave me."

"It was chloroform; and as soon as you were under its influence they left."

"But, they can have no one to aid them, and must be near; ho! Danites!"

The men sprung forward at his call, and he cried:

"Dash through the town, and give my orders for the capture and restoration to me of two maidens found alone."

Away rode the men, and bidding the woman tell them on their return to await him there, Major Leigh mounted his horse and rode rapidly to the home of the Danite head chief.

He found Moultrie alone in his room, pacing to and fro, as was his wont, yet not wearing his habitual look of sternness.

"Ah! Major Leigh, is there news?" asked the chief, calmly.

"Yes, chief, for two captives have escaped."

"How can captives escape from our power, Leigh?"

"Only through treachery, sir."

"Do you suspect the traitor?"

"I do not."

"Who were the captives?"

"Both of them young women who escaped from the emigrant train we fought in the Escalante mountains."

"I understood you that none escaped."

"So I believed; but two women were afterward brought in by my men."

"Well, what was your intention regarding them, Leigh?"

"One, I confess, sir, I desired to make my wife, and the other, too, when she grew to womanhood."

"Ah! would they be willing, think you, to accept the hand that shot down their kindred?"

"It would be a better lot for them than others that might befall them."

"Well, you are your own master, Major John Leigh, so can do as you please, so you do not force a woman to become your wife."

"That I would resent, sir; is there aught else to communicate?"

"Nothing, sir, only I would like a general order issued to have them returned to me when taken."

"Send your couriers to report such an order to the outposts, then."

"Thank you, Chief Moultrie."

"And, Leigh, let me beg that you be more careful in your scouting with your command."

"How mean you, chief?"

"You failed to see, or, if seeing, to report, that a large band of Indians had been seen of late within a few leagues of the city."

"Ah! I had forgotten it; they were but a hunting party of Utes."

"I will warn their chief that they must not hunt so near; they must keep on their Reservation, or we will regard them as foes."

"I will so instruct them, sir."

"And remember; be careful to have no collision with United States troops, or emigrants, as in that affair the other day, for we are not prepared to fight as we would wish."

"True, sir, I will have care."

"Good-night, Major Leigh."

The Danite officer bowed and retired. When he was gone the Danite chief rang a silver bell.

In a moment a servant appeared in answer.

"Tell Captain Vane I would see him."

The young captain, whose quarters adjoined those of his chief, soon appeared.

"Vane, set a trusty spy on the movements of Major Leigh, with orders to report to me daily."

"Yes, chief."

"And place several of your own men that can be thoroughly trusted at the South Pass."

"Yes, chief."

"And hold yourself in readiness for special duty with a score of your very best men and horses, for I may need you."

"I will obey, chief."

The young officer bowed and withdrew, muttering:

"He little knows that I brought them here; but I believe he intends to keep their presence a secret, fearing to allow the Prophet to see his beautiful daughter."

And the Danite chief muttered to himself:

"I can trust Vane for he is as true as steel. I see danger ahead, from that lynx-eyed Leigh, but I will meet it boldly and neither he or the Prophet shall win the prize."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ALLIES SCENT DANGER.

UPON his return to the house to meet his waiting men, Major Leigh gave a few orders to his servants, and mounting dashed away, followed by his Danites.

As they disappeared up the street, two men stepped out from the shelter where they had been concealed, and one said:

"Well, the birds have flown, and they have not gone with Leigh either."

"That's true, Bill; but who have they gone with?"

"You've got me there, Pet. They had evidently just gone when we arrived and had to hide at the coming of Leigh. My stars! but how mad he was: he could have bitten a ten-penny nail in two."

"He could that, Bill; but those girls had no friends, so where have they gone?"

"I give it up."

"They got our note, for I saw them read it."

"Yes, Pet; but they may have found out that that devil Leigh was coming to carry them off, and so left, hoping to find us."

"Then we must look for them, Bill."

"That's just our little game."

"Well, which way first?"

"I'm off the trail."

"And I."

For a moment they stood in a quandary, not knowing which way to turn or what to do.

Then Satan's Pet said quietly:

"When Devil Leigh rode away he went down toward the Danite chief's."

"Yes."

"Well, he may have gone to put the guards on the watch, so let us go there and see if there is any excitement going on."

"I am with you, Pet."

Off they went to the house of Moultrie the Danite chief, and while Buffalo Bill crouched in the shadows of the foliage, Satan's Pet went into the house garden, being well acquainted with the surroundings.

"If you want me, Pet, sing out," said the scout in a whisper.

"Oh, I'll call, never fear, if there's trouble."

Creeping forward the youth soon gained a position near the piazza, and climbing a tree with the agility of a monkey, he peered over the blinds into the room.

He saw the Danite chief pacing to and fro, and just as he looked in walked Captain Elmo Vane.

The conversation between the two he heard and it set him to thinking.

Still keeping his perch on the limb of the tree he saw the Danite officer depart on his mission, and then, as he was about to leave his point of observation, he was amazed to see two female forms glide into the room from a door on the further side.

He gave a low whistle of surprise, but from his position he could not see them, but merely heard the chief remark:

"It is late, you had better retire now."

"And I'll retire, too," he muttered, and at once dropped from the tree.

Retracing his steps to where he had left Buffalo Bill, he hastily informed him of all he had heard and seen, and the two then sat in silence, in a worse quandary than ever.

"I'm afraid it's a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire, Pet," said the scout after awhile.

"You mean their being in the power of the Danite chief?"

"Yes."

"I do not think so, for he is not as wicked at heart as is Leigh, though he is a bold, stern man."

"How can he have gotten possession of them?"

"I am off the scent; let me see, I guess he had spies who told him of Leigh's little game, and he brought them there to protect them."

"And marry them himself."

"A better lot than to be Leigh's wives."

"Six of one, and—"

"No, Bill, the chief is not a marrying man, and he is different from that black-hearted Leigh."

"You seem to hate Leigh fearfully."

"By the God above! but I have had cause."

The words fairly burst from the lips of the youth, and he spoke with almost ferocity in his tone.

But an instant after he said in a quiet way, and with his off-hand air of indifference:

"I'll be in at his death, Bill, for I have sworn it."

"You could have killed him to-night."

"No, I am not ready yet; I wish to talk with him before he dies; there is something I must find out."

"Well, we won't find out the mystery about those girls if we sit here."

"True; but I'll tell you how I'll find out."

"How?"

"What kind of a girl would I make for looks?"

"A beauty."

"Nonsense."

"I mean it, little pard; few girls have your good looks."

"Thank you, Bill; but I will tell you a good plan."

"Go ahead."

"You remember when we were near the Endowment Home this morning?"

"Yes."

"We heard the Danite chief wanted a housemaid."

"That's so."

"I'll be the very girl for him."

"You!"

"Why not?"

"It strikes me you wear pants and not petticoats."

"I can easily change the rig; come, we'll go over to Jew Abrams, our Hebrew friend, and I'll buy a feminine outfit, and go and apply for the situation the first thing in the morning."

"It will be a great risk."

"I like to take desperate chances, and I'll do it, while you remain at Jew Abrams and be a good Injun."

"Good Injun's dead Injun," laughed the scout.

"That's so; well, be your own handsome, brave self, and I'll turn up with news."

"Come!"

They set off at a swift pace for the abode where they made their quarters when in town, and the Jew told Satan's Pet, that:

"I haf te clothes dat makes you just so same as a leetle gal."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MESSENGER FROM FORT BRIDGER.

THE home of the Prophet was the most pretentious mansion in Salt Lake City, and the master of Mormonism, and all that its name signifies, sat alone in his room, the morning after the escape of Dolores Moultrie and Hortense Harmon from the power of Leigh the Danite.

His was a face that would have been kindly but for a certain sinister expression hovering about the mouth: but it was bold, resolute, and intellectual in spite of its sensuality.

Before him on his table were innumerable papers, letters, and what appeared to be legal documents, while upon a black-board at hand was drawn a map of the surroundings of his capital, its approaches, and the natural and artificial defenses.

His brow was contracted into a frown, as he sat there, and the pen he held in his hand was dry, showing that he had been toying with it, instead of using it.

Presently with an impatient gesture he threw the pen aside, and said:

"That wild reckless Leigh will get me into serious trouble yet, either with the States Government, or the Utes."

"Unless he knew them as foes it was all wrong for him to make that attack, and he had no good reason that I can see for believing them to be enemies."

"This wiping out the whole party does no good, for a body of men and women cannot die by violence, and strict investigation not be made."

"I must keep an eye on Leigh, or tell Moultrie to do so, for he is too rash and fond of killing— Well?"

"A United States officer to see you, sir," and a Danite orderly saluted his Prophet.

"Some complaint, doubtless, of which Leigh is the cause; bid him enter, and send at once for Major Leigh."

The Danite retired, and a few moments after a tall, splendid-looking young man, clad in the full uniform of a captain of cavalry in the United States army entered the room, and saluted the Prophet politely.

"Be seated, sir, and allow me the pleasure of knowing whom I address," said the Prophet with courtesy.

"My name is Howland Moncrief, sir, and my rank that of captain in the American army."

"I am here, sir, with a message from General Duncan of Fort Bridger," was the matter-

of-fact reply, yet delivered in a courtly manner.

"Well, Captain Moncrief, I may say that I have heard of you, sir, and am glad to meet so gallant an officer."

Howland Moncrief bowed.

"Now tell me how I can serve you, your general and the United States Government?"

"In scouting the other day I came upon a scene of horror, sir: scores of men, women and children massacred and mutilated, and left unburied."

"Yes. I heard of it, and have just sent for my scouting officer to ask the particulars; he will be here soon, and you can hear what he says. Oh! here he is now."

"Major Leigh, my honored guest, Captain Moncrief, of the American army," said the Prophet, as John Leigh the Danite entered.

It was evident that Major Leigh intended to be most courteous to the Prophet's guest, for he started forward with a smile and his hand extended; but his manner changed at the frigid air of the young officer, who did not offer his hand, but said, with a cold, meaning smile:

"Major Leigh and myself really require no introduction, as we have met before."

"Indeed, sir, where, may I ask?" and the Danite bit his lips with vexation.

"In various little encounters, sir, for I was detailed by my Government to especially watch the movements of Leigh the Danite."

The major made no reply, but his face paled, and the Prophet came to his rescue with:

"Major, Captain Moncrief is sent by General Duncan at Fort Bridger to inquire regarding a massacre that took place in the region of the Escalantes some days ago."

"Ah yes; you refer to that Indian massacre of the train?" was the calm reply of the Danite.

"I refer, sir, to a massacre of a train, but whether by Indians, or—"

"Or what sir?"

"Or Danites—"

"Captain Moncrief, I cannot permit, sir—"

"Major John Leigh, permit me to finish my sentence, sir; I was remarking that whether the massacre was by Indians or Danites, I had come here to find out."

"And your opinion, sir?" asked the Prophet calmly.

"The signs, sir, point to Indians as the perpetrators; but unfortunately all were slain and no one can tell who were the base and cowardly fiends."

"I had formed my opinion, sir, for I came upon the fearful scene, while on a scout, that they were Indians, in fact they could be nothing else, and I sent word to your commander to that effect."

"I then followed the trail, sir, but lost it in the Uintah mountains, for it divided into a score of trails leading among the head waters of the streams that flow into the Uintah river. Returning to the scene of the massacre, I discovered that the dead had been buried, and the marks indicated that it had been the work of troopers."

"Yes, I buried them, and then set to look to find the trails; but they had been so gone over I failed, even with my best scouts, to discover the traces I sought."

"As your opinion points to the Utes, I shall have to so report it, and the general will make an expedition at once into their country, for the captain of the train was his friend, and the newly appointed Indian agent, whom we were expecting, and with him, we learned that he had his young and beautiful daughter."

"It was a very sad affair, Captain Moncrief, and so express my feelings, please, to your general."

"You will remain our guest for awhile, I hope, sir," said the Prophet.

"Thank you, no sir; I am anxious to return and make my report," and saluting the Prophet, but taking no notice of Major Leigh the Danite, Howland Moncrief took his departure, leaving behind him a most uncomfortable feeling in the hearts of the Mormon leader and his aide.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PROPHET AND HIS PET.

"WELL, John Leigh, what does this last rash act of yours mean?" said the Prophet sternly, when Captain Moncrief had gotten beyond earshot.

"Indians."

"Indians what?"

"I say it means Indians," was the cool reply.

"What Indians?"

"The Utes."

"John Leigh, you reported to me a massacre in the Escalante mountains and that not one escaped: what does it mean?"

"I reported to you, Prophet, that a massacre had occurred in the Escalantes, and that not one of the train had escaped."

"Just so."

"Did I report who had done the killing?"

"You led me to believe that your band had been attacked and—"

"You are all wrong, Prophet; my band was attacked by this same train, that is, were beaten off, they fearing we were road-agents; but this same train, while encamped, was met by Utes, who massacred them all; so was my report, if you will remember."

"I am glad to know that such is the case, and that I misunderstood you."

"The United States Government is ever ready to press us hard; but though I am ready to meet them if they drive us too hard, I will not permit acts of deviltry like this massacre, and so understand me, John Leigh."

"Oh! you make it plain enough, Prophet; now to tell you a bit of gossip."

"Well, sir."

"You granted my revered chief, Moultrie, absolution from marriage, I believe?"

"I did."

"You had your reasons?"

"I did. He is a woman-hater, though a thorough Mormon in belief; he is a man who has known deep sorrows, and prefers to be alone."

"A woman-hater, you say?"

"Yes."

"Then why has he two fair ladies residing with him?"

"What?" and the Prophet looked amazed indeed.

"Why, as a woman-hater, and a man who has absolution from marriage, does my revered chief have the right to keep two lovely housekeepers?" said Leigh, with a sinister smile.

"By no means."

"Yet he does."

"No, he has a maid-of-all-work there."

"And two beauties."

"John Leigh, what do you mean?" asked the Prophet, sternly.

"Just what I say, sir; I saw two ladies there myself this morning, though they did not see me."

"One of my spies told me that he saw two ladies enter the chief's grounds last night, and, with a field-glass, I looked into their room from a high elevation, and saw that I had been correctly informed."

"This is strange. Let me know that old Moultrie is deceiving me in this style, and I will deprive him of his rank."

"In that case, I come next, I believe, Prophet?"

"Yes, of course; but, mind you, no trumping up stories to get the place."

"Do you think I would do a wrong to get promotion, Prophet?" asked the Danite, in an injured tone.

"I think that you are a villain, John Leigh; in fact, I know it, yet I cannot help regarding you kindly; but I will withdraw my affection from you if I ever catch you in any one act of deviltry you know would not be sanctioned by me."

"It's catching before hanging, sir," laughed the Danite.

"True, but I may try to see how the old adage works."

"And that is?"

"Set a thief to catch a thief."

"Ah! forewarned is forearmed."

"You have just caught old Moultrie, or pretended to have done so."

"I have caught him, and I will bring the two fair ladies before you, if you wish."

"No; simply watch him, and when you have discovered proof, I will accompany you to his house and unmask him then and there."

"It shall be done, Prophet; and if I catch him you will grant a favor I ask?"

"I think your promotion will be favor enough."

"No, Prophet, for I have another to ask."

"Name it."

"Will you grant it?"

"Yes."

"Then I will tell you what it is when we catch the old fox."

The Doomed Dozen.

"Silence, sir, for Moultrie is your superior officer."

"Ah, I beg your pardon, Prophet."

"You are a graceless dog, I fear, Leigh."

"Perhaps not so black as I am painted, Prophet," and with a salute John Leigh the Danite departed, leaving the Prophet meditating upon the charge made against Moultrie, his colonel of cavalry.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JUDITH.

LITTLE dreaming that when he had spies on the movements of John Leigh, that worthy, through one of his secret service men, had already discovered the secret which he wished unknown, that is, the presence of the maidens in his house, Moultrie the Danite Chief sat in his half-sanctum, half-office, meditating as to the best plan to be adopted for the safety of his lovely daughter and her young friend.

For them to remain in Salt Lake City he knew would bring sorrow upon them, and he did not doubt but that the wonderful beauty of his daughter would at once cause the Prophet to demand her as his wife.

Knowing well the abhorrence that Dolores had shown against the Mormon faith, he knew that it would break her heart to meet such a fate.

And lovely little Hortense would be another prize for the Prophet's eye, he felt assured.

If they should escape this honor then some other personage of less importance would sue for their hands, and the end would be even more wretched.

There was but one course for him to pursue, and that was to carry out his original intention and get the two maidens out of the city.

Having decided upon this course he was about to send for Captain Vane, and make a clean breast of it to him, depending upon his valuable services to aid him out of the trouble, when the door opened and the servant ushered in a young girl.

"Mrs. Barney, sir, has sent this girl up for Eliza's place, and says she can be fully trusted," was the servant's remark.

"Come in and let me see you," and at the invitation the applicant for "Eliza's place" entered the room.

She was a young girl apparently of eighteen or twenty, with red hair, freckled face, that was by no means homely, and a figure that many a belle might be proud of.

"What is your name?"

"Judith, most howly Prophet."

"A Jewish name on an Irish girl," muttered the Dauite, while aloud he said:

"I am not the Prophet, but simply one of his officers."

"I thought yez was after being that same, yer riverence."

"Which, the Prophet or his officer?"

"Divil the loikes o' me cares which?"

"Where did you come from?"

"I was after being a convert from ould Orland, God bless ther grane sod."

"You came over with Elder Broadcastle's party?"

"I did thet same; he converted me ter H'athenism in the ould sod, and I got me passage paid over, and now I'm ridd for worruk or marryin'."

"Ah! what kind of work?"

"Divil the loikes o' me cares, yer riverince, fer I kin cook, wash, iron, swape, and be house-gal in general."

"You will be most useful then, and, Eliza, I will—"

"Don't call me Eliza: me name is Judith, av yer plaze; Judith O'Hara, of the ould sod, which was me father's name 'fore me."

"Well, Judith, I will engage you, for my girl was called away by sickness in her family."

"Go into the kitchen, now, and tell Tom to set you right."

"Oh, I'm all set right, now, yer riverence; and I kin dress hair, too."

"Dress hair; we don't eat hair, here, Judith."

"Who says yez is ter ate it; I says dress it, ther hair o' yer riverence's head."

"Ah! but I take care of the little I've got myself."

"But ther ould lady's."

"I am not married, Judith."

"Oh, ther devil! I thought yez all hed harems in this weild land."

"No, not all of us; but, Judith, I hope you give to talkng outside, about the affairs of a house... when you serve?"

"Divil a talker am I; no, yer riverence, I hev a mouth that niver talks."

"Well, Judith, see to it that it continues so, and if you are asked who forms my household you are not to know."

"I'll be dumb as a parish praste."

"Then go into yonder hallway and knock at a door at the further end, and see if the young ladies need your services."

"The young ladies; oh, the sly look of yer face; will, will, yer riverence, I'll do as yer says, av it's ter marry meself," and the newly-engaged servant went to the door indicated, and knocked.

"Come in," said a sweet voice.

"Oh! that's music through ther kayhole," muttered Judith, and she entered the room.

It was not very bright in there, for the chief had sent word to have the blinds closed; but Judith saw the two maidens seated upon a sofa, chatting earnestly together.

"I'm ther new gurrel, miss, and his riverence sint me to say if yez was afther wanting anything."

They started at seeing a stranger enter the room, for they knew that the chief's house-girl had been called away, and, seeing it, Judith put her finger on her lips, and advanced on tiptoe, while she continued, in a whisper:

"I'm Judith; that is, his riverence is afther belavin' I am; but, before you, ladies, I am Satan's Pet."

They gazed on the pretended Judith an instant, and then saw that it was indeed their young preserver, and their sad faces lighted up with a smile at his wonderful make-up as an Irish girl, while Dolores held forth her hand and said, kindly:

"This is another plot on your part to serve us."

"It is, for here you are in danger."

"I had hoped we would not be, and hence we came here."

"No young girl is safe here in this town, so you must leave it, as already Major Leigh knows you are here."

"Ha! he has found that out?"

"Yes, for I heard him telling one of his spies, as I passed, to keep an eye on the house, and if the ladies left it to at once follow them, and if they attempted to leave the city, to call his comrades, arrest them, and carry them to his mountain den."

"But my—that is, Moultrie, the chief, will protect me."

"If he can; but, if he saved you from Leigh, the Prophet, once seeing either of you, would claim you for his wives."

"Then we are indeed lost," groaned Dolores.

"Your only plan for safety is to leave this place."

"And where go?"

"My ally has a kinsman living near the mines, and we will take you there and leave you with his family until you can decide what is best."

"Who is your ally?"

"Men call him Buffalo Bill."

"Ah! he is that splendid-looking scout, Hortense, who visited our prairie camp one night, and said he had heard John Leigh, the Danite, was with the train."

"Yes, I remember him, and your having known Mercer Aldrich in the East, allayed the scout's suspicions regarding him."

"True; and he is in Salt Lake City?"

"Yes, he came here with me, disguised as a Ute chief."

"Well, I do not fear to trust myself with you and Buffalo Bill, nor will Hortense, so we will have a talk with my—Moultrie the Danite chief, and decide what to do."

"Remember, I am Judith here; but I will be Satan's Pet when needed," and the supposed Irish girl withdrew, and sought the kitchen, where she set to work with a will at her duties.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PLOT.

WHEN Captain Elmo Vane came at the summons of his chief, he found him in a somewhat impatient mood.

"Vane," he said, "I wish you to do something for me, and make no botch of it."

"I shall endeavor to do as you desire, chief."

"Well, to begin with, I have a confession to make."

"If it is to tell me you have two young ladies in your house I already know it, sir."

The Danite chief started.

How had this closely kept secret leaked out?

"Well, sir, may I ask how you got this knowledge?" he said sternly.

"I got it from a spy who was set to watch your house, and you, by Major Leigh."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir, he is one of my secret service men, and one I fully trust, and he told me that the major had put him as a spy upon your house, with orders to arrest any ladies who left it, and attempted to escape, and that they were to be arrested and carried to his den in the mountains."

"Aha! I wonder if the Prophet knows this?" said the chief thoughtfully.

"The major came directly from the Prophet's quarters, sir, when he put his spy on duty."

"Then what is done, must be done at once."

"Yes, sir."

"This spy, as your secret service man, though, need not report—"

"Pardon me, chief, but he must do as the major orders; his duty to me is in warning me, so that I can plot against his commander."

"Ah! this is indeed a land of spies and mysteries; you think he would do his duty as the major orders?"

"Unquestionably, chief."

"Then we can expect no aid from him?"

"None."

"And his orders are to arrest any ladies leaving this house?"

"Yes, chief."

"Then I am in a quandary."

"Can I help you out?"

"That is just what I want you to do."

"Well, sir, let me understand the case."

"It is this; you once went East on secret service for me."

"Yes, chief."

"It was to find my wife and child, or to learn their fate?"

"Yes."

"You came back with sad tidings."

"That your wife and child were dead."

"Yes; but it was but half the truth."

"Indeed," said the captain with mock surprise.

"Yes, my child did not die, her life being saved, and she is now in this house."

"In this house?"

"Yes."

"You surprise me, sir."

"She surprised me, Vane."

"A glad surprise."

"Indeed it was, and a sad one too; but I am content so that she lives."

"It seems she was driven to seek a support for herself, became a governess in a family coming West, and they were with that ill-fated train that was massacred in the Escalantes."

"But she escaped?"

"Yes, she and her fair pupil, and they are the two beneath my roof."

"She knew I was a Mormon, heard my name, and to escape persecution came to me, and she shall have my protection even against the Prophet himself."

"It would be better to save trouble, sir, by having her leave the city," suggested the captain.

"Just my intention; I have a brother who is a miner in Colorado, and a man of wealth, I believe."

"He has a wife, but no children, and I intended sending the poor girls there for the present, for he would gladly receive them, and you were to go as their escort."

"Why not carry out your plan, sir?"

"I dare not."

"Dare not?"

"Yes, for that spy would report their leaving, and that would spring the trap on me."

"We might bribe the spy, or carry him along."

"No, no, for if Leigh has placed him on my movements, you may be certain he has others watching him."

"I declare I believe you are right, chief."

"Then what shall we do?"

"I must think, sir."

"Bedad let me tell yez."

Both men started at the voice so near, and into the room stalked Judith, the new girl, her arms akimbo.

"What means this intrusion?" said the chief sternly.

"It manes the good of yez."

"My good?"

"That same, begorra."

The Doomed Dozen.

"Woman, did you hear what was said?" sternly asked the chief.
"Bedad I'm not dafe."

"This is a dangerous country to eavesdrop in, as you may find to your cost."

"It's 'avesdroppin' does a wurruld of good betimes, yer riverince, an' my overhearin' yez hilps yez out o' thrubble."

"How so, woman?"
"Yez was afther bein' in a quandary?"
"Yes."

"Will, hear the loikes o' meself talk; yer say, ther spoy will be afther catchin' yez av yer l'ave ther ledgies go out of ther house?"

Neither officer spoke a word and Judith continued:

"Av that is afther bein' ther Mormon of it, ther Irish of it is that yer kin change ther females inter min."

"What?"
"Driss them same darlins up in breeches an' thin who ther devil knows that they is gals?"

"By Heaven, you are right; Judith you are worth your weight in gold," cried the chief grasping the hand of the supposed woman.

"Av ther Prophet w'u'd only think so, yer riverince, I moight be afther bein' ther belle o' ther Bayhoive."

For the first time since he had known him, Captain Vane heard the chief laugh, and seeing the advantage gained, Judith continued:

"Av yez wants ther ledgies ter go ter Colordy, me partner an' meself will be afther takin' them."

The chief now glanced upon the supposed woman with suspicion, and said:

"Captain Vane, here, is to be their escort."
"You may nade him, and I kin be afther takin' them there gintale."

"Woman, I almost fear that you are one of Leigh's spies.

"What think you, Vane?"

The young Danite officer, who had begun to see his pleasant duty as escort fading away, was willing to condemn Judith at sight, and answered seriously:

"There is no tellin', chief, who are spies upon us."

"Then, although we take her suggestion, regarding the metamorphosing Dolores and Hortense into young men, I think we had better secure her, until all danger is over."

"True, sir."

"Bedad, but yez is a foine pair o' Mormon hathins thin."

"I am sorry, my good girl, but the safety of these ladies, and ourselves, just now, demands that we seem unjust to you."

"If we find out we have wronged you, I will make such ample payment for my mistake as will reward you."

"Be afther callin' ther ladies, an' say av they won't give me a good character."

"But they do not know you."

"Bedad, yez moight be wrong; jist call them, av yez plaze."

The chief walked to the door of the room, in which sat Dolores and Hortense, and called to them to come with him.

"My daughter, this is Captain Vane, my special aide and friend; Miss Harmon, Captain Vane."

All then bowed as though they had never before met.

Then turning to Dolores the chief continued.

"My child, I have been plotting with the captain, here, how to get you away in safety.

"I intend sending you to my brother, Lyman Moultrie, in Colorado, where you will have a warm welcome; but your presence here is known, and spies are set on the house to prevent any ladies from leaving it; but this good woman, who was eavesdropping, came to our rescue with the suggestion that you disguise yourselves as Danites, and—"

"A good idea, sir."

"But I fear this woman, who volunteers to accompany you to Colorado, may also be a spy of Leigh's, who can thus get you into his power."

"Bedad, am I, Miss Dolores?" said the supposed Judith.

"No, I'll vouch for it she is not a spy."

"And I," said Hortense.

"But your hearts may run off with your heads," suggested Captain Vane.

"Colonel Moultrie, I will cease my masquerading, for I am not what I seem, but one who came to this house in disguise to save your daughter and Miss Harmon."

In amazement both the Danite chief and the captain gazed upon the supposed woman, and the former cried in a hoarse whisper:

"In the Prophet's name, who are you?"

"Men call me Satan's Pet," was the cool reply.

"Satan's Pet! that deadly foe of the Danites?" cried the chief, while Captain Vane dropped his hand upon his revolver.

"Yes, the foe of John Leigh and his old band known as the Danite Dozen."

"We all know you, and also remember that there is a price set on your head," said Captain Vane.

"I am worth it, so you had better take me," was the fearless reply.

CHAPTER XXVI.

UNMASKED.

"FATHER, this young man is our friend, for he it was who risked his life, and led us from the train, that awful night of massacre, and he has again taken desperate chances to come into this place and save us," said Dolores, with some spirit.

"From my heart I thank him; but may I ask why you hold this deep interest in Miss Moultrie and Miss Harmon?" asked the chief.

"Yes, the interest I have in them is their misfortune, in having fallen into the hands of such hellhounds as Leigh and his Danites."

"Ha! you speak boldly; remember I am the Danite chief," sternly said Moultrie.

"I do not forget it, sir, I assure you; I know that you, and your aide here, are not the class of men that are Leigh and his Danite hounds."

"Those are my game, and I have dogged their trail for two long years, and will never leave it until John Leigh and his Danite Dozen are wiped from off the face of the earth which they pollute with their vile presence."

All were struck with the intense manner of the disguised youth, and they seemed to forget his make-up as an Irish girl, when they met his flashing eyes.

"This is a bold threat," said the chief.

"It is not an idle one."

"Then you never met these ladies until you saw them the night of the massacre?"

"I never did, sir."

"I believe you, and I will trust you; but I advise you to leave Salt Lake too, as men are constantly on your trail to win the reward offered for you."

"I know my danger, sir: but this is by no means my first visit to Salt Lake City, and it shall not be my last."

"And you propose to have the young ladies dress up as men?"

"Yes, sir."

"And thus leave this house in company with Captain Vane?"

"No, sir; you are under watch now, as is also the captain, and were he to leave with them you would at once bring suspicion upon them."

"True."

"When they are found to be gone the captain and all his men must be here to answer at roll call."

"Then what?"

"The Prophet will believe his spies were misinformed."

"Ah, yes."

"And that these ladies, in their disguise as men, may leave unsuspected, it would be a good idea for you to send to your different officers to come to your quarters to-night, under some excuse for consultation, regarding this late massacre, we will say, and then their riding off will prevent the spies holding the slightest suspicion."

"You are right indeed."

"And more, sir, they must have two of your best horses for speed and bottom, and we will need too—"

"We?"

"My ally and myself; our animals are hidden away in the mountains, for we came in disguised as Utes, and on foot."

"Yes."

"I would advise that your cook, myself for instance," and Satan's Pet laughed heartily, "prepares a haversack of provisions for the ladies, and that they be supplied with arms, for fear of accidents, for if we do load our horses heavily in the start, the scout and I will soon get our steeds, and yours can serve as pack animals on our march."

"My friend, all shall be as you suggest; but are you competent to take this trail alone, with two ladies under your charge?" asked the Danite chief.

"I have been hunted for two years by your

Danite command, and also by the Indians, and no one yet has gotten the reward for my head," was the modest reply.

"That is true, as I ought to know, having offered it at the command of the Prophet."

"And besides, I will not be alone."

"Ah, yes, you have an ally?"

"And a good one, and also the foe of the Danites."

"His name?"

"Buffalo Bill, his pards call him."

"By the Prophet! there is no better man on this frontier, though he be an enemy."

"I agree with you there, chief, and, like our friend in petticoats here, Satan's Pet, he seems to have a charmed life, and well deserves his name," said Captain Vane.

"Thank you, sir, for my half of the compliment. Now I have dinner to get, so must retire," and Satan's Pet turned away at the general laugh which his remark brought forth.

"Hold! where is your friend, this Buffalo Bill?"

"At our Salt Lake Snugger, sir, where we always put up."

"Then I will send him word—"

"No, don't, for you won't know where to send; and if you did, he wouldn't come."

"I will go myself as soon as I've got dinner, and we'll both come back good Danites, mount two of your horses, which please have ready, join our pards, who have discarded their petticoats, and be ready for the trail by nine o'clock," and with a military salute, Satan's Pet departed for the culinary department.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A STRANGE QUINTETTE.

AFTER the departure of Satan's Pet in his comical disguise of an Irish Judith, the Danite chief, his aide and the maidens held a short consultation in regard to what was best to be done.

Captain Vane said he could easily secure the disguises for the young ladies, and also the belts of arms, while the chief promised to give them the best horses in his stable and their equipments, adding:

"You will have to stick to your disguises on the whole trail."

This the maidens promised to do, and then they departed to their room to make all necessary preparations, while the chief and Captain Vane rode out together to reconnoiter and discover the exact whereabouts of John Leigh's spies and how many of them were on duty.

Hardly had they departed from the house, before the trusted butler and valet of the Danite chief came into the kitchen where the pretended Judith was preparing dinner with a skill that was not to be expected of him in his new calling, and at the same time singing an Irish song.

"You is not so Irish as you look, be you?" said the butler.

"What is it yez is after remarking, Misther Thomas?" and, ladle in hand, the cook turned upon him.

"You can speak English when you wish?" and there was a grim smile upon the man's face.

"Is it dumb, dafe or crazy I am, that I'm not after understanding yez?"

"Oh, you understand well enough, and I'm not dumb, deaf or crazy."

"Bedad, ther man is clean gone woid."

"No, I have not; but I have ears."

"And so he's after havin' every other jackass, Misther Thomas."

"Do you call me a jackass?" said the man, with anger.

"Be jabers, it's not the loikes o' me that w'u'd be after callin' ye at all, at all."

"You are a fool."

"How was it that iver ye found that out, yer b'athen Mormon spaldeen?"

"By listening at the door."

"Oho, ye war eavesdroppin'?"

"I heard enough to advise you to go in with me and let the Prophet know."

"Little profit ye'll ever git out of it."

"Yes, he'll pay well for the news."

"Take ther goods to him thin."

"I intend to; only there's some things I can explain—"

"Yer hearin' wasn't as good as ye'd loiked, maybe."

"Yes, I could not hear all, so advise you to tell what I want to know, and we'll go halves on the cash."

"Thomas, your foresight isn't after bein' as good as yer hindsight, or ye'd never be

afther comin' to a dacent woman an' ax her to sell her fri'nds."

"Dacent woman? You are no woman, but a man."

"Yes, a man and your master, you accursed traitor," and Satan's Pet sprung upon the fellow and grasped him by the throat.

"Hold! I am one of Leigh's spies; hands off, or you'll regret it," gasped the man, struggling fiercely.

"When I take my hands off you, thou devil, it will be when you are dead," was the savage reply, and instantly the struggle became fierce and desperate between them.

Hampered by his woman's attire, and with a desperate man to deal with, and a powerful one, it looked as if Satan's Pet had met more than his match.

But his gripe was one of iron, and his movements so rapid, that the man could not handle him with the ease that he had at first believed.

For a few moments it looked like an equal match, and then, as if to end it, Satan's Pet let go his hold, and quickly drew a knife from the bosom of his dress.

His enemy saw this, and in vain tried to ward off the blows, for once, twice, thrice, the keen blade fell, and each time the point had touched the heart.

Springing to his feet Satan's Pet glanced around him, and then hastily dragged the body to a closet and hid it away.

"Well, a pretty looking cook I am; but it's better being mussed up in my toilet than dead," and he set about arranging his attire, and then in setting the kitchen to rights, at the same time muttering:

"It looks as though there had been an Irish wake here; but certain it is that another Danite has gone—yes, number nine of the Danite Dozen.

"I knew him the moment he took off his sanctimonious look and showed himself the traitor," and he continued his work until dinner was ready and placed on the table.

"But where is Thomas, Judith?" asked the chief.

"Gone, sir."

"Gone where?"

"Discharged."

"Who discharged him?"

"I discharged him, yer riverince."

The chief looked at his quondam cook in amazement, but received a hint to say no more before the ladies.

But after the meal was over he heard the whole story.

"My God! what shall be done with the body?"

"Oh! I'll attend to that, sir."

"You?"

"Yes, sir; he's stiff as a poker now, and we'll tie him on horseback, so he'll look all right, and carry him with us."

"Once in the mountains, and I can drop him over a cliff, and tell the ladies you only sent him along to see us out of town in safety."

"But the horse?"

"He'll come back to his stable, and you can give out that your trusted Thomas robbed you and decamped."

"Young man, I do not wonder that you bear the name of Satan's Pet given you."

"Judith, yer riverince," and with a light laugh the youth turned away, while the chief went to see his daughter, for it was but a short time longer that she would be with him.

The last conversation between the Danite and his daughter was a sad one, and yet they both felt that if the escape from the Mormon city could be made in safety, the shadows on their lives would begin to pass away.

With the setting of the sun Satan's Pet, still in his female costume, left the house and wended his way to Abrams the Jew's.

There he found Buffalo Bill most anxiously awaiting the result of his masquerading as an ish girl, a convert to the Mormon faith, and, having heard the youth's plans, entered into them most readily.

"You are a trump card, Pet, and we can soon change ourselves into good Danites," said the scout, and half an hour later the two left the Jew's house, their "snuggery," as Satan's Pet had called it, and went straight to the residence of the Danite chief.

A number of horses were already hitched at the rack and fence, and going to the stables they found the five intended for their use all ready, for Captain Vane had faithfully performed his part of the work.

Three raps at the window was the signal for the maidens to appear, and these Satan's Pet gave.

A moment after two forms came out of the kitchen door of the house, and were met by the youth who led them to the stable.

"All ready, Bill," he whispered, and a horse was led out and Dolores was mounted upon his back, and the reins placed in her hands, her tiny feet in the stirrups.

"Next!" Out came another steed, and Hortense was placed in the saddle.

"Who is that?" asked Dolores in an alarmed whisper, as a horseman came out of the stable.

"A man who goes a short distance with us," answered Satan's Pet coolly, and he mounted his own horse and placed himself alongside of the animal that bore the dead Danite, propped up in the saddle, and his cold hands having the reins wound around them.

Riding on the right of the maidens, Buffalo Bill gave the order to forward, and the strange quintette moved away from the stable, passed the house, at a window of which stood the form of the Danite chief anxiously awaiting and watching, and then out of the yard into the highway.

A man walking slowly by glanced up suspiciously into their faces, as they passed but said nothing, as he evidently believed them to be officers called to the council of the Danite chief.

"That is Leigh's spy," said Satan's Pet in a low tone.

No one replied, and on the quintette went through the streets, the men perfectly calm, the maidens trembling violently, but resolute to face any danger rather than remain in that hated city.

At last the lights of the town were left behind, and sharp and clear came the order:

"Halt! who comes?"

With an effort Dolores and Hortense suppressed the cry that arose to their lips, while Buffalo Bill answered sternly:

"Friends."

"Dismount, friend! advance and give the countersign, or we fire on you."

"Be calm; it is the sentinel only," whispered Buffalo Bill, as he obeyed the order, walking up to the point of the bayonets of the two men who stood in his path.

"The countersign!" said one, sternly.

"Long live the Prophet."

"Correct; you can pass, friends."

With a light heart Buffalo Bill returned, mounted, and the quintette moved on their way, Dolores and Hortense drawing a long breath of relief, for they had crossed the Rubicon.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON THE TRAIL.

WITH the most perfect faith in their escorts, Dolores and Hortense rode on, their hearts growing lighter with every mile they cast behind them.

Fatigue, under the circumstances, they were willing to stand, and both Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet were surprised at the unflinching fortitude they exhibited in their hard ride, for the horses were urged on rapidly.

At last the youth, who was riding by the side of his companion, silent in death, called to Buffalo Bill that the messenger would return, and that he would halt an instant with him.

The scout understood what Satan's Pet meant, for they were riding alongside of a precipice; but, hearing only that the man was going back to her father, to tell him of their safety thus far, Dolores quickly halted and rode back, followed by Hortense.

"Will you say to my father, please, that so far we are safe, and that we have full confidence in those who are our protectors?"

The man made no reply, as a matter of course, but sat up straight as an arrow, gazing directly at her with his wide-open, staring eyes, from which the light had forever gone.

"Tell him, too, that I hope to one day, ere long, meet him again, and may God bless him."

Buffalo Bill was at a loss what to say or do, and for once Satan's Pet seemed nonplussed.

But he quickly rallied, and said:

"Miss Moultrie, this man belongs to the Ever Silent Order of Danites, and he will never answer you."

"Ah! but he understands, so that he can tell my father?"

"The fellow understands, if he's got his wits

about him; why, he hasn't spoken to me on the whole ride out."

"Then you, sir, who know the signs with which to communicate with him, kindly tell him what I say," persisted Dolores.

"I'm not wholly up in his sign language, Miss Moultrie, but I'll do the best I can; but we must not tarry here."

Buffalo Bill took the hint, and, waving his hand to the dead form, as if in farewell, moved on with the maidens, leaving Satan's Pet happy at the corpse having escaped recognition of what it was.

Quickly unfastening the props and ropes that held the body in position in the saddle, he placed it on the ground, and then drove the riderless horse back toward town.

Raising the body in his arms, he then walked to the precipice and threw it over into the dark abyss, and stood listening until it dashed with a dull thud on the rocks far beneath.

For a moment he stood in silence gazing down into the dark depths, and then, turning, bounded into his saddle and dashed on after his companions.

Overtaking them, he placed himself by the side of Hortense, and urging a greater speed, soon came to a narrow ravine, into which he turned.

A ride of a mile from this point, and over a dangerous, and seemingly a trail never before taken, brought them to the summit of a steep hill.

Here they halted, and dismounting, led their horses down the steep declivity to a valley below.

"All right, Bill; our horses are here," cried Satan's Pet, and a call brought his splendid animal trotting up to his side and following him came the steed of Buffalo Bill, the two having been turned loose for days in a little vale, from which there was but one avenue of escape, and that had been securely barricaded by trees which their masters had cut down and made into a fence.

"You've been in clover here, nags, and had the best grass and water in the mountains, and a long rest, so you'll be able to go well on the long trail," said Satan's Pet, while Buffalo Bill took the maidens from their saddles and spread a blanket upon the velvety grass for them to rest on.

A halt of several horses, a rest, and substantial breakfast, and the party mounted once more, and started on their way just at dawn, the horses ridden out from Salt Lake by Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet, serving as pack-animals.

And thus for awhile I will leave the fugitives on the trail to Colorado, while I beg the reader to accompany me back to the city of the Mormons.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THWARTED.

"WELL, Leigh, you have dropped in just as I wished to see you," and the Mormon Prophet turned to Major Leigh, who just then entered his private rooms unannounced.

"I always try to anticipate your wishes, Prophet."

"That's the way with you, try to get credit for coming, when you know well enough you would not be here, if it were not to further more interests of your own."

"I tell you, John Leigh, you are a sly dog."

The Danite major laughed and answered:

"I have come to prove to you that there are other sly dogs in your kennel, Prophet, and older ones than I am."

"Perhaps there are; but I told you that you were here to serve your own interests."

"If, in my endeavor to show that you have misplaced your confidence, I serve myself, then I acknowledge the truth of your accusation, sir."

"Well, who is it now, John Leigh?"

"My chief."

"Moultrie?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"It is not well."

"You know what I mean."

"Oh! what has he done?"

"Yes."

"What I told you."

"About the two ladies?"

"Yes, sir."

"They are there?"

"Yes sir."

"Have you seen them?"

"I told you I had seen a woman passing by the window, when I looked with a glass."

"Go on."

"My spies report that no woman has left the house, other than the servant girl."

"And they are there now?"

"Yes, Prophet."

"He had a council of officers last night?"

"Yes."

"You were there?"

"I was."

"What was done?"

"A plan was proposed for the better organization of the Danite Cavalry, and the strengthening of all outposts."

"Good! that Moultrie is a good officer."

John Leigh made no reply to this, but said:

"Will you pay an unexpected visit with me to the chief's house?"

"It seems to me you are very anxious to spy out your commander's faults."

"I only act for your interest."

"And your own."

"In part."

"Well, we will go, and if I catch old Moultrie deceiving me, off comes his head."

"Figuratively speaking, you mean, Prophet?"

"Yes, though as you supersede him, it would be as well, perhaps, to have him shot, so as to set you an example," and the Prophet smiled grimly.

"As you please, sir, you rule."

"And intend to do so; but what do you wish me to do for you?"

"I have a favor to ask."

"So you said, so name it."

"I am attached to the elder lady of the two—"

"Ha! you know them?"

"I have an idea that they are Gentiles who came here to become converts."

"Ah! continue, please."

"You have promised to grant me the favor I ask, and it is that you allow me to claim the one I desire?"

"Yes. Now order a platoon of guards to follow me to the chief's house."

The order was given, and the Prophet and his favorite officer departed for the house of the chief of the Danites.

Moultrie met them at the door, pretended not to see the guard within call, and bade the Prophet and his officer be seated, at the same time ordering a domestic—for he had already filled the places left vacant by Thomas and Judith—to bring refreshments, and spoke of the honor done him by the visit of the Mormon leader.

After a few wily remarks, to put his host wholly off his guard, the Prophet said, abruptly:

"Moultrie, I learn that you have taken unto yourself a wife."

"Indeed, sir, there is a mistake," was the cool reply.

"Nay, two of them."

"It is not true."

"Who, then, are the females that have been seen in your house?"

"My domestic, doubtless; there is no other here."

The Prophet looked at the major for encouragement.

He had always found Moultrie, the Danite chief, a most truthful man.

"I am sorry, chief, but certain reports of that nature were brought to me, and I was compelled to place it before our Prophet," said John Leigh in a tone meant to be regretful.

"You did right, Major John Leigh, to report me for any wrong you believed me guilty of, for the Prophet is my superior; but if I find you in any dereliction of duty, being your superior, I will deal with you myself."

The Danite major winced under this shot; but, confident that he held his chief in his power, he said, in response:

"We are all liable to err, sir, and pardon me if I consider that you have done so in your statement to the Prophet."

"In what respect, John Leigh?" and it was evident the chief controlled his temper with an effort.

"In saying that there are no ladies concealed in this house."

"The house is not so large, Prophet, but that it can be easily looked over."

"No, no, Moultrie. I guess you were misinformed, Joh Leigh," said the Prophet, hurriedly.

"I was not, si..."

The chief stepped to the door and hailed the guard.

"They were Danites of the chief's command, and came quickly at his call."

"Give the officer your orders, Prophet," said the Danite leader.

"Search this house thoroughly, place guards that no one can escape, and bring any human being in it into this room," was the stern order of the Prophet, while Moultrie said, with a sneer:

"Perhaps Major John Leigh will see that the search is thoroughly made?"

"By the Mormon creed, I will," and he arose and joined the searchers.

Every crevice, closet and room was thoroughly searched by the guard, and researched by the anxious Danite major, and then the report was made to the Prophet, who looked sternly at John Leigh, while he said:

"You were misinformed, sir; pardon me, Moultrie for my doubt, and feel that you are fully restored to my confidence."

"I thank you, Prophet."

He bowed with his words, and then turned quickly to the major, while he said:

"And you, sir, I place under arrest."

"What! do you dare—"

"Hold! John Leigh, you seem to forget Danite law, that gives me, your chief, the power of life and death over you."

"Guards, place this man in irons!"

The chief towered to his full height, his face was white and stern, and there was that in his look that forbade interference even from the Prophet.

For a moment it seemed as though John Leigh would resist; but he thought better of it, and grimly submitted to his fate, confident that the Prophet would not see him too severely punished.

CHAPTER XXX.

SET FREE.

WHEN John Leigh lay in irons in a room of his chief's house, he had time to reflect that he had gotten himself into a most dangerous situation.

A reckless fellow ever, he had never cared what were the laws that held the Danites together; but now there came back to his mind a legend that he had laid upon his head the penalty of death, for his doubt of and insolence to his superior officer.

The remembrance of the chief's face too reminded him that he would not trifle with him, and he became livid with fear, for, though a man who would take fearful chances against death to accomplish an end in view, he was a coward when he felt that he must really die.

He called to his guard, while the sweat stood in beads on his forehead, intending to send a pleading note to the Prophet, begging him to intercede for him.

To his joy he saw that the guard who answered his call was one of his own special spies.

"Hunton, I am in trouble," he said, in as calm a tone as he could command.

"So it seems, sir."

"Where is Chief Moultrie?"

"He has gone up to the Death Den, they say."

John Leigh now grew to the hue of a corpse, for he knew that only one thing could carry the chief to the Danites' Death Den in the mountains, and that was his execution, or a demand for his trial by the Black Jury as the Judges are called.

"Hunton, it is not generally known that I am a prisoner, is it?"

"It is ordered to be kept a secret, sir."

"Ah! that looks worse for me."

"It does indeed, sir."

"Hunton, where are the other guards?"

"Over at the stable, sir."

"I have done you many a favor, my man."

"Yes, sir."

"Will you do me one?"

"If I can."

"Release me and go with me."

"Ah, sir, this is asking too much."

"I have plenty of money, Hunton, and we will share it."

"But where would we go, sir?"

"To my mountain retreat."

"It is there the chief has gone."

"So much the better; when sought for they will not look there, and I know plenty of hiding-places."

"Well, sir, I will go with you."

The surprise of the man's sudden determina-

tion to aid him, almost upset the Danite major, and he feared he was not in earnest.

But the guard stepped forward, took from his belt the key of the manacles, which each one on duty gave to the other when relieved, and John Leigh arose to his feet a free man.

"Come, sir, I go off duty in an hour and we must get off," said the man hurriedly, and the two instantly left the house by the way of the piazza and crossing the garden were soon in the street.

At his own house he had left his horse when he had called on the Prophet, and thither they went, and soon after were riding away like the wind.

The soldier, being a guard for the day answered the challenges of the sentinels with the countersign, and in the darkness they passed by a party of six horsemen, two in advance a short distance, riding toward the town.

"The chief and Vane, as I live! a narrow escape that," muttered Major Leigh, and he drove his spurs into his horse and rode more rapidly on, followed by the guard.

A ride of some leagues and they entered the wild grandeur of the mountains.

It was a desolate place, dark and lonely; but the Danite officer and his comrade followed the trail without difficulty, until at last they came to where it wound around an abrupt spur, and turned into a canyon.

"Hold on here, major!"

The cry came from the guard, and quickly the officer drew rein, and half turned in his saddle.

"Well, Hunton, what the devil is the matter?" he asked impatiently.

"I'll tell you what was the matter, John Leigh; you are my game."

The reply came hoarse and determined from the lips of the guard, and a rifle covered the officer.

"Good God! Hunton, what do you mean?" he cried in alarm.

"I mean that you are unarmed, and my rifle covers your heart."

"But, man, you do not intend—"

"I do intend to kill you, John Leigh."

"Great God!"

"Yes, for you deliberately shot down my brother one day, when in an angry mood, and I have sworn to take your life for it."

"But, my good Hunton, he was disobedient, and you know our laws."

"You were insolent to the chief to-day, John Leigh, and he intended to have you die; but that would not be my keeping my oath to kill you."

"Now pray, for I shall kill you, rob you, and forever give up the accursed life I lead, for I know well the horse you ride will carry me beyond pursuit."

"Mercy, my good Hunton."

"Don't ask mercy of me, for my breast holds no mercy for you."

"Now pray, for you have just one moment to live."

"Mercy!" appealed the man almost reeling from his saddle as he saw death staring him in the face.

"One!"

Like the knell of doom came the word.

"Remember, at five I fire."

"Oh God! I will give you thousands to spare me."

"You always carry large sums of money with you, I know, so I will get your thousands, take your life, and have my revenge too—

"Two!"

The man bowed his head upon his breast and trembled violently, for he felt death at last had his grip upon him.

"Three!"

He could not speak, he could not move.

"Four!"

With the word came a flash and sharp report, followed by a death-cry and a heavy fall of a body to the earth.

CHAPTER XXXI.

GOOD FOR EVIL.

THE shot that had been fired as Hunton gave utterance to the word *four*, had not come from his rifle, though it would have flashed at *five* without doubt.

And the fall of a body to the earth had not been John Leigh.

Nor did the death-cry come from his lips.

The flash had come, it so seemed, out of the very side of the mountain, and the bullet,

truly sent, found the heart of Hunton the guard, from whose lips had escaped the cry.

Surprised, shocked, stunned at the sudden change from despair to hope, John Leigh could only sit like a statue upon his horse and gaze against the black wall of the mountain.

Who had fired the shot he did not know.

Presently a rustling of the bushes was heard, and a form, clad in pure white, stepped out of the dense shadows, and stood before him.

Then did his tongue find utterance in one word.

"Queen!"

"Yes, John Leigh, for the third time I have saved your life."

"For the third time, ay, many times, have I returned good for evil," said a low, yet clear and soft voice.

"Queen, from my innermost soul I thank you."

"Thanks! why they, from your lips, are as idle as the wind."

"But come, for men expect you to die tonight, John Leigh."

"To die?" he gasped.

"Yes; your chief has been here, and the Black Jury are ready to visit upon you your fate."

"By heaven! they shall not, for I am a free man!"

"Free to escape the Black Jury, never!"

"What mean you?"

"Your steps will be tracked through life."

"I will fly to the uttermost parts of the earth."

"And desert me?"

"No. You go with me."

"Then you must face the Black Jury."

"But death will surely follow."

"I have a plan to save you."

"Name it."

"No, trust to me: your chief has returned, to send you here, and ere sunrise you are doomed to die."

"But you escaped, I heard from the lips of that corpse how, and a thousand men will be on your trail at once."

"Oh heaven! what shall I do?"

"Throw that body out of the trail and come with me."

"But, Queen—"

"If you have doubt of me do as you think best."

"I will do as you say."

"Then come to the Death Den, give yourself up, and say that you have come to face your doom."

"But—"

"Obey or not, as you please."

"What am I to do?"

"Put on your black suit and mask and meet your fate."

"Death."

"If the rifles of the Black Judges have bullets in them, yes; if not, then your life is safe, for you can fall at the fire, and will be at once placed in your coffin, and laid in the vault."

"Oh, Queen!"

"I have already drawn their bullets, and I will release you from your coffin, and to give you air it has holes in the side which I have made."

"Good, noble Queen."

"Cease your hollow praise and thanks, and ride on and do as I tell you."

"There will be no mistake about the bullets?"

"None."

"There were twelve guns you know."

"And I drew out twelve bullets."

"And you did not mistake the coffin prepared for me?"

"No."

"I will trust you, Queen."

"Would to God I had never trusted you, John Leigh," broke passionately from the woman's lips.

He would have replied, but she pointed on up the trail, and dismounting he threw the body of the guard one side, turned his horse loose, remounted his own steed and rode on further into the shadow of mountains.

The woman watched him for an instant, and then turning, quickly disappeared under the shelter of the lofty cliff from which she had so unexpectedly appeared and saved the life of a man who richly deserved death.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE BLACK JURY.

In one of the wildest parts of the mountains, reached only by trails that seemed almost im-

passable, and which could be defended by a few men against a host, was situated the Danites' Den.

The passes to the mountain caverns, for there were a score of them, were mere fissures in the rocks, which towered far overhead.

The largest of these caverns had a man pacing before it day and night, armed to the teeth, and jealously guarding the interior from intrusion.

Up to this man rode Major Leigh, and, as the revolver of the guard was leveled at him, he said:

"Hold! do you not see who I am?"

"Pardon, chief; it is so intensely dark I did not recognize you."

"Are the Black Judges in council?"

"They are, and have been since sunset."

"I will see them."

Throwing the rein of his horse to the guard, who had evidently not known of his arrest, John Leigh strode into the cavern.

The passage was large, and tunnel-like, and dimly lighted by lanterns hung along the walls of rock.

Following the passageway the Danite officer, after a walk of a hundred yards, came to a rudely constructed doorway, that barred his steps.

He gave twelve distinct raps upon the stout door, and waited.

A footstep approaching was soon heard, and a voice asked:

"Who comes?"

"Leigh."

"The word?"

"Death to traitors."

"What faith?"

"Danite."

There was heard a chain rattling within, and the door swung open, revealing a man in a black mask and long sable gown.

He looked eagerly at the Danite through the holes in his mask, and seeing that he was alone, asked:

"Where are your guards?"

"I came alone."

"The chief trusted you?"

"I asked him not; I escaped, and have come to deliver myself up for punishment."

"Come," and fastening the door the Black Juror led the way into a large rotunda.

It was a dismal place, the walls being draped in black, and but a single lantern hanging from a cord in the center, giving light to the vast space.

In the middle of the rocky chamber was a black altar, upon which was a coffin, and upon either side were niches in the walls, in which were visible the foot-ends of boxes in which were the dead of the order who had suffered punishment for their crimes.

Back against the wall sat eleven men, clad as the one who had admitted the Danite major, and by their side that one took a seat, as soon as the visitor was brought before them.

"Judges, I know my sentence and I have come to meet it," he said in a firm voice, though he was very pale, and his hands were clasped tightly together, as if to keep his emotion in check.

"Our chief Moultrie had reported you as worthy of death; his word is law, and we have assembled to execute you, John Leigh," said one of the Judges in sepulchral tones.

"I am ready," he answered falteringly.

One of the Black Judges then arose, and going to the altar in the center of the rotunda, beckoned to the Danite major to approach.

He obeyed with as firm a step as he could.

Taking from the coffin a black gown the Judge bade him put it on.

This he did with a shudder he could not suppress.

Then one by one, he took from the sable coffin a musket, and handed them to his colleagues, reserving one for himself.

"Now, John Leigh, take your stand," he said in a low tone, and he led the doomed man to the further wall of the rotunda where a coffin was standing up on end, the open part fronting them.

"Clasp your hands, John Leigh."

He did so, and upon his wrists were placed irons.

"Get into your coffin, John Leigh."

With a shudder that shook his frame he obeyed.

Stooping down the Judge then placed irons upon his ankles, and rising, fastened three

chains across the front of the coffin, as it stood on end.

"Farewell, John Leigh," said the Judge.

"Farewell forever, John Leigh," echoed his confreres.

But John Leigh never spoke; in fact, notwithstanding the promise of the woman he had called Queen, he was so overcome with emotion, he dared not trust himself to utter a word, for fear he would shriek out with horror and fright.

"Will she keep her pledge?"

This question his mind was revolving continuously, and he knew that he must bide his time to discover, for now there was no hope for him, did the woman fail him.

Back to his comrades, who were ranged along in a row, standing behind the altar, went the Judge who had secured him in his loathsome coffin, and for full a moment the twelve stood thus in silence.

Then in chorus, and in a tone that distinctly reached his ears, they repeated as follows.

"John Leigh: by our laws doomed to die for treachery against a member of our band, be he low, or be he high in rank, you now meet, at our hands, the Black Jury, the death you have brought upon yourself."

"Thus dying, with treachery in your heart, and venom in your soul against a fellow Danite, you have no hope hereafter, as symbol of which we iron you hand and foot."

As though drilled by word, the twelve men put one foot a step backward, raised their muskets, cocked them, brought them to their shoulders, and, as one gun, they were discharged.

The sound was terrific, there in that vaulted chamber of rock, and the dense smoke of powder almost darkened the room.

But the Judges, as though accustomed to such scenes, walked slowly forward and halted fronting the coffin.

The form of the Danite major had fallen forward, and was hanging limp against the chains, which prevented its falling out.

Then the coffin was lowered, the form adjusted in it properly, and the lid put on, the hammer, driving in the nails, awakening many a dismal echo in the cavern.

Raising it, they then thrust it into a niche in the wall, dropped a sable curtain before it, and slowly marched from the death-chamber.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A CRY FOR MERCY.

THE roar of the muskets, when they were turned upon the heart of John Leigh, reached the ears of a person crouching among the rocks on the side of the mountain.

It was the same woman who had fired the shot that saved the life of John Leigh from death at the hands of Hunton.

She waited for some time after the echoes of the firing had died away, and then arose from her crouching attitude, and began slowly to ascend the rugged mountain side.

Over her shoulders she carried a long coil of rope, and her dress was pinned up close around her form.

At last she paused at a clump of dwarf mountain cedars, and pushing aside the foliage, entered.

Once within their shelter, she unwound the rope from her shoulders and fastened one end securely to the trunk of one of the cedars.

Then she bent over and looked down into what seemed to be a cavernous tunnel running down into the mountain.

With her head thrust forward, she listened attentively for some moments, and then muttered:

"Yes, they have gone."

Uncoiling the rope, it was now seen to be a ladder of hemp, the foot-rests being hardly more than six inches wide.

Taking up one end of it, she let it fall gently, slipping through her hands down into the hole, until the whole length had disappeared, excepting what was fastened to the tree.

Trusting herself to this she rapidly descended from sight, and, after some thirty feet through this funnel-like space, she came to a shelf of rock.

Here she rested in the intense darkness and listened.

Apparently satisfied at hearing no sound, she took up the coil of rope, for it had stopped there, and carried it a few steps, and again lowered it.

As soon as it became taut she went over the edge of the rocky shelf, and began to rapidly

descend—into what seemed to be a vast cavern of perfect blackness.

Suddenly she paused in her descent, hanging in mid-air upon the rope, for her ears had caught a sound.

"What? can any of them be here?"

"No, it is dark, and they therefore must have gone."

"But, I certainly heard a voice."

"Mercy! oh, God! mercy! help! help! help!"

"Don't let me die here, for I am not dead, I am not dead."

The wild cry, coming from the black depths below, caused her to almost lose her hold of the rope ladder, great as seemed her nerve.

"Thank God! all went well."

"Poor boy, he fears I have deserted him," she cried, and once more she began her rapid descent and soon her foot touched the solid rock.

Then, from back against the wall came a muffled shriek and loud cries for help.

"Courage, John, poor fellow, courage, for Queen is here," she said, soothingly.

An hysterical laugh was the answer to her words, and she cried:

"Great God! I fear he has gone mad."

"Yes, John, yes."

Instantly a bright light flashed upon the scene from a dark lantern she had carried, and quickly she went toward the back wall, drew aside the sable curtain, and seized the end of the coffin.

With an effort of strength one would not believe her capable of, she drew the coffin from the niche, and lowered it gently to the rock flooring, while the moaning and laughter, mingled together, continued.

Seizing the hatchet from within the coffin on the altar, where she seemed to know that it was kept, she hastily raised the lid of the box, keeping up all the time soothing words of encouragement to the poor wretch within.

At last the lid was raised, and the livid face of the man revealed.

"Good God!"

The cry broke from her lips, for she saw that his hair had become snow-white.

Running quickly to the coffin on the altar, she seized a bunch of keys and instantly unlocked the chains and irons that held the man prisoner.

"Now, John, you are free."

"Free! yes, free; but great God! I would rather die by slow torture than pass through again the misery I have known in the days and nights I have been there," he groaned.

"Days and nights, John? Why, you have not been there half an hour."

"What?"

"It is true; not half an hour has passed since the Judges fired upon you."

"God in Heaven! it seemed weeks to me."

"Come, nerve yourself, for you have a dangerous trip before you," she said, as she placed the empty coffin back in its niche, arranged the sable folds before it, and returned the hatchet and keys from whence she had taken them.

"Come, John," and she led him to the rope ladder.

"Up here?" he asked, mechanically.

"Yes; my woman's curiosity led me to a cave above one day, and I found that it was an unknown opening in the rocky roof of the Death Den, and thus I found it and investigated its mysteries."

"Thank God that you did, Queen. Now I believe I am ready to go; but follow me closely."

"I will, John."

Up the ladder he went slowly, and evidently with an effort, and closely she followed him, cheering him with kind words all the way.

At last they reached the shelf, and she drew up the ladder, and then ascended to the tunnel-like cave above.

Coiling her rope and closing her dark-lantern, she said, calmly:

"A fourth time, John Leigh, I have saved your life; come with me."

Silently he followed her, for he seemed completely under her control, without volition to act for himself.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MORMON WIFE.

A STOUTLY built cabin stood against the precipitous side of a mountain, and was hidden away in a little glen of Eden beauty.

There was one heavy door to the cabin, two windows, one at either end, and protected by thick shutters, and a chimney, from which the smoke curled upward against the mountain side.

To this lonely spot, and seemingly strong retreat the woman led the Danite major, opened the door, with a key she took from her pocket, and said quietly:

"Enter, John."

She soon had a lamp shedding forth a pleasant light, which showed that the room was by no means uncomfortable, for it was furnished neatly, and around the walls hung paintings executed with considerable skill, cayon sketches, and many little odds-and-ends trinkets, as if made merely to pass away time.

There were books there also, a guitar, fancy Indian worked robes and dressed skins of beasts, and a hammock that served as a bed.

Taking from a cupboard a flask of silver, she gave the man a drink of brandy, and drew a chair up near the table and urged him to sit down.

He swallowed the liquor eagerly, and sunk into the chair, while she sat down on the other side of the table, and leaning her chin in her hands gazed straight at him.

His face was haggard in the extreme, his eyes sunken, his complexion livid, while his hair was white as snow, showing but too plainly the agony he had endured.

And the woman?

A face of Madonna like beauty, and so sad and lonely in expression that she seemed hardly earthly.

White as marble and as pure was her spotless complexion, and as black as night were her eyes, while her hair was golden, and coiled in large braids about her head, serving as a covering, and looking like a turban.

She was dressed in white cloth, and had loosened the folds of her dress upon entering the cabin, for when she descended into the Death Den she had fastened them around her.

Her form was full and faultless, and there was an air of refinement about her that showed how sadly out of place she was in that drear abode.

"John Leigh," she said softly. "Have you not had a life-long lesson to-night?"

"Yes, Queen."

"Now, you say so; but with the bright sunshine of to-morrow will you feel the same way?"

"Yes, Queen."

"Oh John! why will you not let this night be a warning?"

"To the world you die this night; let it be that you begin a new life."

"Remember, John, years ago I told you I loved you, when you came to my home in far-away Delaware."

"It was a happy home, John, for my father and mother were there, and my darling little brother."

"You won my love, and I believed you all that man should be."

"I became your wife, John, and we left dear old Delaware for your Western home, where you said you owned a cattle ranch."

"And where did you bring me?"

"To Salt Lake City."

"A Mormon yourself, you brought me West to degrade me with your belief."

"Ah, John! it was a cruel blow to me, for I shared your love and home with others—yes, your two other wives."

"It broke my heart, John, yet it did not turn my love from you."

"I fled from you one night of storm, caring not where I went, and you sought and found me, nearly dead in these mountains."

"And you let the world of Mormonism believe me dead, and brought me here."

"Here I reign as queen, for they are not here?"

"You know that my other wives died, Queen," he said, in a low tone.

"So you told me, John; poor women, I do not wonder they died, if you deceived them as you did me."

"And here, John, I have lived for years, only a few of your trusted followers knowing the dread secret."

"And in my nook I have been content, for I have had sunshine in your visits now and then."

"And, John, you know that I have lived for you, and four times have saved you from death."

"Once from a foe who would have struck you in the back, had I not warned you; once from one of your wives, maddened with jealous rage; once from an Indian, whom I shot, ere he could let fly his arrow, and to-night, when

that man held you in his power, I took again on my soul the stain of human blood, rather than see you die."

"Now, John, you are believed dead; you dare not return to Salt Lake, for instantly would you be recognized and die."

"Through all your crimes I have loved you, and now I beg you to go far from here with me, and let us live away from your foes; let us go to my parents, in their old Delaware home, from whom I have not heard for so long, and to whom I have not dared to write, knowing that they look upon me as having become a Mormon, and, in their minds, an outcast."

"I have money here, John, as you know, so let us by night, steal away in disguise, and seek my parents and beg them to forgive, forget, and take us to their hearts."

She dropped on her knees before him, and looked pleadingly into his face.

But he said no word and stared at her as though he looked upon a ghost.

"Speak, John, and tell me if you will go?"

"Where?" he asked, huskily.

"To my home, to my kindred."

"Queen."

"Well."

She saw by his manner that he had something to tell her, and she gazed straight into his face with an appealing, hunted look.

"Queen, I cared not to give you pain, so have kept it from you."

"Kept what from me, John Leigh?" she asked, in a stern voice.

"Queen, forgive me, but I deemed it best to add no more sorrow to your life than I had brought upon you."

"John Leigh, speak! my parents; what of them?"

She was strangely calm, and he almost feared to speak.

"Speak, sir, for I know you have evil tidings of them."

"I have."

"I am listening, sir."

"Queen, for God's sake don't look so."

"John Leigh, are my parents dead?"

"Yes, Queen."

"And my brave, noble brother?"

"Dead."

"And how know you this, John Leigh?"

"They were coming West to settle, Queen, for your father met with reverses, and they had written me to meet them at a certain point, and then they would decide where to live."

"Well, sir?"

"I hoped to give you a glad surprise, by taking you to their new home some day, and so said nothing to you about their coming, Queen."

"But alas! they left their train, with two other families, and, disregarding the dangers to be encountered in these wilds, they sought to find a valley in which to settle themselves, for unavoidably I was prevented from meeting them."

"Go on, John Leigh."

"Alas! Queen, it pains me to tell you more."

"I am calm, sir."

"Too calm, Queen; but I must tell you all, now that I have begun."

"They were set upon by Indians, and—"

"I know the rest; they were all murdered?"

"Yes, Queen; but for God's sake do not look so; you fairly frighten me."

She arose with strange calmness, paced to and fro for awhile, and then said quietly:

"Come, John, we must not be here with the rise of the sun; let us go."

"But where, Queen?"

"Anywhere, so we leave here."

"In the cave you will find your horse, for I took him from the sentinel you left him with, and the three you gave me."

"There are things here we can pack on two of them, so let us be off."

She set about her work with a calmness that was distressing, and the man's heart quivered with fear as he muttered:

"Great God! not one regret, not a tear or a sigh; only this forced calmness."

"Can she suspect, I wonder?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

ANGELS' REST.

IN a lonely valley of one of the tributaries of the Grand River, a number of mining camps dotted the fair landscape, with here and there the pretentious, for that country at that time, house of a Gold King.

The rich ore was wont to pan out in large quantities for the industrious miner, and each camp in the valley had become a miniature village, with its blacksmith shop, schoolhouse, which was the church, or meeting-house on Sundays, jail, hotel, dozen stores, and score of drinking saloons, which were gambling hells as well, and the shanties, cabins, tents and more extensive houses of the denizens scattered around in the most desirable localities.

Of the half-dozen villages, or camps, of this kind in the valley, Angels' Rest took the palm as the garden spot, and the richest, not to speak of its greater dignitaries, and the fact that it could boast of a score of handsome women as denizens of the place.

And the dignitary of dignitaries in Angels' Rest was Lyman Moultrie, a man who had been one of the first miners to "strike it rich" in the valley, and had had fortune pan out well for him ever since.

As the mining camp grew in importance, Lyman Moultrie had started a graveyard by killing a desperado who took it into his head to run the place; then he was made constable, and afterward justice, and finding Angels' Rest on the eve of great prosperity, he went East and brought his wife there.

She was the first woman to locate in the valley, and a refined, kind-hearted and beautiful lady, she soon became the idol of the rough miners.

But other miners sent for their wives, or took unto themselves wives who emigrated West, and Angels' Rest thrived; but still Lyman Moultrie held his position as the man of the town.

One day there was great excitement in Angels' Rest, for a rumor ran like a torrent down the valley, that Lyman Moultrie had adopted two lovely girls from the East, one of whom was his kin, and they had come to the place to live.

Nobody had seen them enter Angels' Rest; but they were there, and the miners who passed the really pleasant house of the Judge, as Mr. Moultrie was called, and saw them seated on the piazza, expressed themselves in the belief that the "Rest" now deserved its name, as the Angels had arrived.

Instantly all the young beaux of the valley, and many of the old ones too, began to spruce up, get shaved, buy white shirts, and try to keep clean, while the poor little tailor of Angels' Rest saw an immediate fortune ahead of him, in the orders received, and raised his prices for clothes.

And moreover, young miners with a poor claim, but good looks, began to go to their "diggin's" by the way of Judge Moultrie's mansion, as the six-roomed, white-washed log cabin was called.

It mattered not which way they had to go to work, they went round by the Judge's, until each morning and evening appeared to be a Sabbath, with Christian stragglers meandering to and from church, for they were wont to wear their "best clothes" to the mines, get into their working suit there, and change to come home with.

The result of these changes was that within a few days after the arrival of the fair guests of the Judge, half the mining population were down with colds and the doctor and the "quacks" were kept busy, while the undertaker had an occasional call for his services.

And who were those beauties who had driven Angels' Rest so mad that every young miner, and their name was legion, who owed the Judge a small sum of money, borrowed the amount from some other friend and went up to settle it in person, investing that much with a hope they would see the maidens?

They were none other than Dolores Moultrie and Hortense Harmon, who, after a long trip, in which they had passed through many hardships and dangers, had safely arrived in Colorado at their destination, guided thither, and protected by Satan's Pet and Buffalo Bill.

Long after midnight the party of four had ridden into the valley, and a late wayfarer, going home from a saloon dead broke and drunk, had directed them to the home of the Judge, who, upon being aroused, had given them a hearty welcome, and called to his wife:

"Come, Sue, here is poor brother's child and her friend, so hurry up and give them welcome, with the two handsome young men who have brought them to us, thank God."

Such a welcome made them feel at home at once, and when Mrs. Moultrie came in, having thrown a wrapper around her, and kissed the

maidens affectionately, the lonely wanderers felt that they were no longer alone and friendless.

But Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet would not tarry; they said they would not give it away, by their presence that they had brought the maidens there, but would run away for a hunt of a few days.

To her uncle Dolores told all, excepting her belief that the pretended Utes who had massacred the train were Danites: this she kept to herself, as Satan's Pet had asked her to let himself and the scout work up the clew in their own way.

"Well, my child, and you, too, Hortense, this shall be your home, for we have no children, and gladly will we give you our love; won't we, wife?" said the Judge.

"With all my heart, Lyman, and I believe this is the first step toward breaking your brother loose from his allegiance to those wretched Mormons," answered the good woman.

"God grant it," said Dolores, earnestly.

"Now, Suse, you'll have to look up petticoats, for these girls have worn the breeches long enough."

"Oh, we have more clothing with us, uncle; only man's attire is so much better to travel in," said Dolores, quickly.

"I'll bet a gold claim your male attire didn't keep those handsome fellows from talking love to you."

"Yes, uncle, for they treated us with the greatest respect, and both Hortense and myself shall ever love Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet," was Dolores's remark.

"They are noble fellows, both of them, and their fame is well known in our valley; but come, you are at home, and must have some rest."

And, with a feeling of perfect rest, the maidens laid them down to sleep in a soft bed, and where no danger threatened them.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HERCULES BLUFF.

A FEW days after the arrival of Dolores and Hortense in Angels' Rest, the citizens of that festive mining village had another cause for excitement.

This, as in the former case, was occasioned by an arrival in the town.

The new-comers rode into the valley in broad daylight, and were splendidly mounted and thoroughly armed.

They were dressed with almost dandy neatness, and were certainly as handsome a pair of men as ever were seen in company.

"Riding up to The Paradise, the inn of the Angels' Rest, they dismounted from their horses, threw their bridle-reins to a Chinese hostler, and told him to give the game, with which the animals were loaded, to the host of the hotel with their compliments.

Upon the Register, which was a couple of quires of foolscap sewed together, and with a buckskin cover, they wrote their names as follows.

"WILLIAM F. CODY—'Buffalo Bill,'
"Guide and Scout U. S. Army."

"ARNOLD AUBREY—'Satan's Pet,'
"The Danites' Foe."
"Utah."

Hardly had they gotten out of sight on their way to their room, under the guidance of a Chinese servant, when two score of men, who had noted their arrival, sprung for the register.

Then their comments began:

"Buffalo Bill! waal, he are ther boss scout, or I lies like a parson," said one.

"Yas, Bunk, he are lightnin', I hes heer'd."

"He are oncommon young-lookin'."

"He are oncommon han'some."

"Oh! but I has heer'd that he are some onther shoot."

"But t'other chap hain't way back down ther lane, ef ther court knows itself."

"What! Satan's Pet?"

"Yas."

"Waal, he hain't; they do say he hev raised tickler Satan with ther Danites up at Salt City."

"He were one o'a gang as was lit inter by Leigh, ther Danite, I has heer'd, an' he got away; but he's been in ther killin' biz ever since."

"He's pretty as a painted pictur o' Little Sam'el, as I hes see'd in Sunday-schules."

"They is both screamers fer looks, an' ef ther Moultrie gals lays eyes on 'em that'll be fun'rals and weddin's hereabouts, I'm tellin' yer."

"I guesses they'll git thar pluck tried on in Angels' Rest, fer ther boys will want ter diskiver ef they has come honest by thar names."

"They'll get it tried on ef they goes foolin' round them Moultrie gals, fer I intends ter git on tarms with one of 'em, an' ef she don't wilt, I'll try t'other," said a surly voice, and his re-

mark seemed to close the conversation, and those in his way fell back, for Hercules Bluff was the bully and terror of the valley.

He was six feet four in his boots, weighed over two hundred, without an ounce of superfluous flesh upon him, was straight as an arrow, knotted all over with muscles, and was a dead shot and bad hand with the knife.

No man that knew him had ever seen him backed down, and many a man he had caused to pass in his checks.

His face was refined in expression and very handsome, giving the direct lie to his cruel, heartless, and quarrelsome nature, and he dressed like a dandy, wearing a blue woolen shirt, with brass buttons, a white silk scarf for a cravat, black pants, stuck in handsome cavalry boots, and a military hat.

Across his broad breast was a massive gold chain, diamond studs were in his shirt frot, and heavy gold buttons in his cuffs, while a solitaire of considerable value glittered on the small finger of his left hand.

In a bead-worked belt, with a huge silver buckle, were three revolvers and a large bowie, all silver-mounted, and they looked as though they were for use instead of show.

He was a gambler and miner combined, working his claim every Sunday, and playing cards during the week days.

Walking up to the register he glanced contemptuously at the names, and said with a sneer:

"Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet."

"I have heerd of 'em, an' I guesses ef they stays long heur they'll heur o' me."

"I'll be sartin' ter interdoose myself, ef I catches 'em puttin' on frills up at ther jedge's, fer I hes met them leddies, an' I is dead struck on both."

"Yer hes heard me talk, pard's, and yer all knows Hercules Bluff."

They did all know him, and not a word was said as he walked away.

But when he was gone a long breath was drawn, and one said:

"Pards, we is safe ontill next time."

"Yas; but yer hear me talk, Diggas, thar'll be music in ther Rest 'fore long, fer them children hain't going ter be bullied, even by Hercules Bluff."

"It'll be a case o' ther right chu'ch but ther wrong pew ef he tackels 'em, I'm thinkin'," said another.

"Yas, he'll punch ther ticket o' ther wrong passenger ef he wakes 'em up."

"Pards, I camp right out heur ter see ther fun: no diggin' dust fer me, ontill I see ther meetin' called," and this last remark seemed to be the prevailing opinion of the loafers of Angels' Rest.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HERCULES BLUFF'S LITTLE GAME.

As ill fortune would have it, Mr. Hercules Bluff had been on hand to render a favor to Dolores and Hortense one morning a few days after their arrival in Angels' Rest.

The Judge had been giving them, with his wife, a drive in an army ambulance he had purchased, and the two horses, wild as bucks, had become unmanageable and started to run, but were caught by Hercules Bluff, whose giant strength quickly brought them to a stand-still, and saved, without doubt, the lives of the entire party, as the road wound around a precipice a short distance ahead, over which all would have been dashed.

The Judge knew Hercules Bluff well, and though shunning him, had been careful not to offend him, as he cared for no row with the fellow.

But now, in his thankfulness, he had introduced the bully to the maidens, and accepted his invitation to get in and drive the horses home, as he was completely worn out from tugging at them.

It was Sunday afternoon, and Hercules Bluff had been working his claim all day; but willingly knocked off work and jumping in drove the horses up to the door of the Judge's home, and was of course invited to remain to supper, an invitation he promptly accepted, if the ladies would excuse him while he went to the hotel and "slicked up."

He came back in his best suit, and was certainly a splendid looking man; but heart and soul had been neglected in his composition to make the form.

He was delighted with both maidens, and it was nearly midnight before he left, and his being there, caused a dozen or more, young beaux who had dropped in during the evening, to curtail their visit to a few minutes' duration, and then poured oil on their troubled souls by standing outside in the darkness and cursing him.

But his appearance at last put them to flight, and he strolled slowly back to the hotel convinced that he was in love, had made a deep impression, and intended to marry.

As for Dolores and Hortense they had heard his character, and though thankful to him for saving their lives, they disliked and feared him; but the Judge had warned them not to anger him.

One afternoon he strolled up to the "mansion," and invited the maidens for a walk.

The Judge and his wife were away on a visit, and not daring to refuse, they accepted, and Hercules Bluff led the way into the town.

As it was Sunday afternoon, he knew all the boys would be loafing about, and he determined to show them his prizes, as he called them.

It happened too, to be the day after the arrival of Satan's Pet and Buffalo Bill at the Paradise Hotel, and just as the bully and the maidens came in sight, the two friends left the hotel for a walk, intending to call at the Judge's.

They had kept their room constantly since their arrival, lying off and resting; but had now put on their best looks and were on the way to make a call.

"Does yer see them pilgrims, Jeddies?" asked Hercules Bluff, upon catching sight of Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet.

At a glance both Dolores and Hortense recognized their brave protectors, and the former said quickly:

"Yes, it is Mr. Cody and Mr. Aubrey, gentlemen whom we have before met."

"Gentlemen, is they? Waal, I guesses not, fer I says they is durned gerloots, an' I'll show yer that I makes 'em howl, moppin' up ther road with 'em."

Both Dolores and Hortense were now alarmed, for they felt that it was the intention of the bully to "show off" before them.

They knew that he was a giant in strength, and a fearful hand with the revolver and loved a difficulty; but they also knew he had two dangerous persons to deal with, and of course they dreaded trouble, and Hortense cried nervously:

"Come, Dolores, let us go back, please."

"Yes, we will return, Mr. Bluff," answered Dolores.

"No you don't; I hain't that kind o' gerloit.

"Toem gerloots writes the'r names Satan's Pet an' Buffler Willi'm, an' I are Hercules Bluff, as will show yer some fun with 'em."

In the mean time all who knew Hercules Bluff's nature, felt that, his being with the maidens, would make him insult the two strangers in the valley, and they gathered quickly to see the fun.

Buffalo Bill, when they were within some fifty paces, halted to shake hands with some miner who had met him before, while Satan's Pet walked on, and, seeing that the bully was determined for a row, both Dolores and Hortense concluded not to run off, hoping that their presence might prevent trouble.

But vain the thought; they had not yet learned the true inwardness of border character.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A BORDER SPORT'S MISTAKE.

ALL on the principal street of Angels' Rest were now duly excited, for with frontier instinct they knew there was trouble brewing, and like veteran war-horses snuffed the battle from afar.

In fact many of them preferred to snuff it from afar, well knowing that many an innocent person got shot in a street *melee*, instead of the one who should have caught the bullet.

With a perfect understanding of how matters would go, if it came to "draw and fire," they left an open space for the bullets to fly, if they missed their intended marks.

All this neither Satan's Pet or Buffalo Bill seemed to see.

The former, smoking a cigar, came quietly along toward the ladies, before whom stood Hercules Bluff, for all three had halted.

On the bully's face was a sinister smile of anticipated triumph, and it was certain that he intended to start the fracas.

As for Buffalo Bill he still talked to the citizens of the Rest, and seemed unconscious of any excitement.

Drawing near to the maidens and the sport, Satan's Pet caught the eye of Hortense, who, anxious to prevent trouble, said quickly:

"How do you do, Mr. Aubrey, I am so glad to see you."

"And I also, Mr. Aubrey," and the two maidens advanced with extended hands.

"And so is I, Mr. Gerloit, put it thar," and ere either Dolores or Hortense could grasp the youth's hand, Hercules Bluff sprung forward, seized it with a gripe of iron, and gave him a jerk that dragged him off his feet.

Satan's Pet was possessed of remarkable strength for his size and age, for he could not be over nineteen, but with a man like Hercules Bluff with a gripe on his hand, pulling him about, he was powerless to resist, unless he used a weapon, and this the presence of the maidens prevented.

"For shame, Mr. Bluff," cried Hortense.

"We do not care to see your brute strength, sir," said Dolores.

"Oh, let him have his fun," said Satan's Pet, pleasantly, keeping his feet in spite of the terrific jerks the huge bully was giving him.

"I'm so glad ter see yer, yer dandy gerloit," laughed the bully.

"When you get tired using my little pard as a whip-cracker, shake me up, please."

The remark was made by Buffalo Bill, and, as if to enforce his request, he dropped his hand upon the arm of the Hercules in a style that checked the intended jerk he was about to give the youth.

"This is my circus, Bill," said Satan's Pet, cheerily.

"Well, I'm ring-master, Pet, and shall stir up the giraffe," and his grasp, still on the wrist of the bully, caused him to release the hand of the youth.

He knew by the feel of the scout's hand that he had a man to deal with, and attempted to drop his clutch upon a revolver in his belt; but he was dealt a blow upon his arm that benumbed it, while Buffalo Bill cried:

"No, you don't take that trick, pard, but follow suit."

As he spoke another blow, like a sledge-hammer, fell on the arm, and then with lightning rapidity the strokes rained thick and fast in the bully's face.

In vain was every effort of the bully to release his right wrist from the scout's steel gripe; he could not do it, and his left arm had received several such stunning blows as to render it almost useless, while the fist of Buffalo Bill, driven into his face one moment, and upon his chest the next, bewildered him, and the blood blinded him.

In amazement, both Dolores and Hortense shrank back, but were held by sheer fascination to the spot, for they had believed no three men could handle Hercules Bluff.

In dumb astonishment the crowd gathered around, wondering if it was the huge desperado that was being so severely punished.

With folded arms, and an indifferent air, Satan's Pet looked on, only once remarking:

"That's your claim, now, Bill; work it all you've a mind to, for you've struck a good lead, and the claret pans out well."

This raised a laugh from the crowd, for they saw that Hercules Bluff was too blinded with blood to see who of them enjoyed the joke.

At last the bully, in utter frenzy, suddenly thought of kicking his foe, for, never having had any one dare face him before, he really knew not how to handle himself, depending wholly upon his brute strength.

But when his first kick was given, out from under him, as quick as a flash, was knocked his other leg, by a sudden movement of the scout, and the giant fell his length upon the hard earth with a force that left him breathless.

A wild yell burst from two hundred throats at the defeat of Hercules Bluff, and a rousing cheer was given for Buffalo Bill, who raised his sombrero, and walked on and joined Dolores and Hortense, who extended to both the friends a most hearty welcome.

"I'll lend you my other hand to shake, ladies, for this one got caught in a vise," laughed Satan's Pet, and the four turned back toward the home of Judge Moultrie, who just then hailed them from his vehicle, he and his wife having arrived in time to witness the punishment given the bully.

"Bravo, Cody, you've done Angels' Rest an everlasting favor in punishing its greatest devil, whom we all thought infallible."

"Come on, you and Aubrey, with the girls, and have supper, and we'll drink a toast in my best brandy to the Border Sport's mistake in waking up the wrong passenger," and, laughing heartily, the Judge drove on, leaving the young people to follow on foot.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HORS DE COMBAT.

WHEN Hercules went down under the punishment given him by Buffalo Bill, there were plenty of his satellites ready to play the Good Samaritan and raise him up.

Not that his toadies did so from any feeling of affection for him, for there was not really one person in Angels' Rest who liked him; but the truth was, they feared him, and did not expect Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet to make their residence there, and knew that the bully would remain.

Because he had received one thrashing, it was no sign that Hercules Bluff would allow himself to continue to be whipped, any more than was it that one swallow will make a summer.

With these personal considerations to govern them, the toadies, appointing themselves a relief committee, carried Hercules Bluff to his room at the hotel and sent for the entire medical force of Angels' Rest.

As the doctors all arrived together, they had to take the patient *en masse*, and when they caught sight of his face they concluded that a *post-mortem* was in order to decide by autopsy what he had died of.

Of their mistake, however, Hercules Bluff soon made them cognizant by a few round oaths, and they set to work to put him in shape once more.

With the cuts and bruises he had received and the swellings that followed, Hercules Bluff was by no means the handsome man he had been a couple of hours before, and this he realized when he got a glimpse of his face, and during the dressing of

his wounds and plastering up of the cuts, entertained the medical fraternity with some choice profanity and threats against Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet.

"This heur arm feels ez tho' a muel hed let drive at it with his bizziness eend; doctor," he growled.

"It is only bruised," answered an M. D.

"Only be d—d; I wish you hed ther bruise, yer cussed pill pirate, an' I guesses yer'd think yer'd been blow'd up in a steam ingine."

"We'll soon bring that round all right, Mr. Bluff."

"Ef yer don't, I'll give that old coffin artist a leetle work on your account, for ef yer don't know yer biz yer is no good, ther whole tooth-drawin', leg-sawin', pill-givin' pack o' yer."

"Now, durn yer, see ef this heur wrist o' mine hain't been swinged with a red-hot iron."

"It is where he had his gripe on you, Mr. Bluff; a powerful man, I should say."

"Then you tells ther truth now, ef yer does lie sick folks black in ther face at other times."

"Powerful! waal, I hain't no baby in arms, an' ef I didn't think that hell hed bu'sted up through ther mines an' was a-rushin' red hot through Angels' Rest, yer kin call me a liar."

"I jerked that young cuss round a leetle, jister git acquainted with him, and he hain't no slouch, fer he comed down' every time on his pins, tho' I did lift him some, as yer may hev see; but when that steam saw-mill on stilts got a holt on me, then the devil were to pay an' no pitch hot."

"Powerful, did yer say? yer durned old terrier o' measles, he are a leetle mite more powerfull then were that boss o' em all Sampson, as I has heerd about killin' thousands o' Fu'l'stines with the jaw-bone o' a jackass."

"I tell yer, pill pard, at fust I thought I were Sampson, then I got the idea I were the jawbone, until at last I concluded as I were the Fu'l'stines."

When at last the doctors had put Hercules Bluff in the best condition possible, and told him he had to remain indoors for a week, they took there departure amid a storm of oaths.

Then the toadies took him in charge to cheer his loneliness, and began by telling him how Dolores and Hortense had laughed while he got whipped, a story they had manufactured just to keep up the bully's spirits.

The next day Buffalo Bill and Satan's Pet left Angels' Rest, and this news was detailed by the toadies as a proof of their fearing to meet Mr. Bluff upon his arising from a sick couch.

Then hints were given that the scout and the youth stood the best show with the maidens up at the Judge's, added to which inflammatory piece of information, was given the opinions of the citizens of the valley regarding Hercules Bluff deserving the punishment he got, and the general belief that it would cow him to such an extent as to make him keep in the background.

That these stories, retailed with variations and embellishment, to the *hors de combat* bully, did not add to his peace of mind may be readily imagined, and when he at length, after weeks' illness, to allow the bruises and cuts to heal, got out upon the street, he was in the mood of a frerzied tiger, and swore vengeance against every one in general.

So determined was the desperado to show that he was not cowed, that a man, a peaceable miner, who looked at him curiously, was knocked down for it, and a friend of his interfering, was shot dead.

"Ther lion are out ag'in, pard, an' we is ter be all chawed up," was the cry that went around the town when the desperado began his murderous exploits once more.

CHAPTER XL.

THE WOUNDED DANITE.

SEVERAL weeks after the trouble between Hercules Bluff and Buffalo Bill, a horseman was riding slowly through the mountains, not many leagues from Salt Lake City, and following no trail, apparently.

Suddenly he drew rein, for, beneath a rude wicky-up, made of the boughs of trees, he saw a man lying, apparently in deep sleep.

The face was pale and haggard, the form emaciated, and there was that appearance about him and the surroundings, that showed he was ill.

Dismounting quietly, the horseman approached, and the man opened his eyes with a start, and tried to get his hand upon a pistol that lay near.

"Hold! I will not strike a man when he's down, though I recognize you."

"And I recognize you too; you are the Danites' foe, Satan's Pet," said the man in a low tone.

"That's what men call me," was the reply.

"And you deserve the name; yes, and you are right to follow the red trail you have, as I well know."

"Yes, you should know, for you are one of Leigh's Red Dozen, and, if you were not flat on your back I would kill you now, so hurry up and get well so I will feel no compunctions about it."

"Pard, I said awhile since you were right to follow the red trail you have, for I know how

you and yours suffered, and my brother and myself tried hard to stop that devil's work, but we could not."

"Do you speak the truth?"

"I do, pard, and to prove it, John Leigh killed my brother on account of ill-feeling started at that time from what he said."

"I have been a bad man, but I meant not to be as bad as that, and I remained with him to one day avenge my brother."

"You had ample time and opportunity."

"Not to escape after it; but the other night I tried it; he was arrested by our chief, put in irons, and was to be taken to our Death Den to die."

"I aided his escape, and in the mountains was about to kill him, for he was unarmed and I held him in my power; but a woman saved him, and gave me this wound."

"A woman?"

"Yes; she was at the roadside, and heard what I said to him."

"And shot you?"

"She did; and they both believed she had killed me, and he dragged me out of the trail."

"And John Leigh?"

"Went on to the Death Den, and the next night, as I was hiding in the bushes, I heard two men pass, talking together, and they said the Black Jury had killed him."

"No, no, no! that cannot be; no, it is not true, for John Leigh cannot die by other hand than mine."

"This has been my prayer, my belief, and my presentiment, and many a time have I spared him, knowing that in the end I would kill him."

"Yes, as soon as I killed those twelve, of whom you are one," and Satan's Pet spoke excitedly.

"I am one, only one other lives now, for Leigh killed my brother."

"I have sent nine to their doom, and they all knew who was their slayer."

"Your brother was ten, and you are eleven, and I spare you from what you said; but there is one more, and then comes Leigh."

"That other is one of the guards at the Death Den in these mountains."

"Ah! then he dies soon, and then comes Leigh."

"He's dead, I told you."

"I say he is not; he will only die by my hand; no other can kill him."

"You talk as if you knew; but please help me a little, pard."

"Willingly, my poor fellow; here is my hand that my enmity toward you has ended."

"This was a bad wound."

"Yes, I had to dress it myself, for I dared not let any one see me, and I hid here and have been here ever since."

"Alone in this wretched place, and almost dying?"

"Yes, pard; I had a little food and it has kept me, and you see the creek's near."

"You are a brave fellow and I will soon bring you round all right; now let me dress your wound."

Satan's Pet was a skillful hand with wounds, and he soon probed for the bullet, cut it out with almost professional skill, and dressed the wounded arm so well that the man said he already felt a hundred per cent better.

A good shelter of boughs was then made, his own blankets spread for the wounded Danite, and a meal prepared of which he ate with real relish.

"I'll camp with you Mr.—"

"Hunton is my name, sir; Edward Hunton, and I hailed from Maryland before I was fool enough to come out here and turn Mormon."

"Well, Hunton, you can turn back again; better be a turn-coat than a Mormon, and I'll camp with you and nurse you well; then we'll look up number twelve of that Docmed Dozen, and after I have killed him, I'll find Leigh."

"You are awful cool about it."

"That's the way to be."

"And you don't think John Leigh is dead?"

"No more than I am."

"Well, sir, if you kill the guard, Chadwick, when he's on duty at the Den, then there's a way of finding out, if you don't fear the dead."

"No, nor the living; the dead certainly are the best neighbors, Hunton, so we'll find out."

"Well, sir, I know the ropes, and I'll show you as soon as I get on my pins again, and then I'll strike east again at a rapid pace, as old Ebony yonder has had a good long rest, and plenty to eat," and he pointed to his horse, lariated not far away.

CHAPTER XLI.

NUMBER TWELVE.

UNDER the attentive nursing of Satan's Pet, Hunton, the ex-Danite, for he had sworn to give up Mormonism and all connected with it, recuperated so rapidly that it was not many days before he expressed his willingness to move.

He felt anxious, even in that solitude where his camp was, for fear some one might stumble on it, and he be run down by his former comrades, for aiding the Danite major to escape, as they knew not his motive.

So, one afternoon, near sunset, Satan's Pet

saddled the horses and aided Hunton to mount and they set off for the Death Den.

It was late when they arrived in the canyon that led up to the cavern in the mountains; but they rode on, Hunton knowing the signals and passwords, should they be halted.

Up the ravine to the front of the Death Cavern they went, until halted by the sentinel on duty.

"I am from the chief; is the Death Jury in reunion?" asked Hunton, keeping at a safe distance and disguising his voice.

"No, the jury will not meet for three nights?" was the answer.

"It is not the man you seek," whispered Hunton, and he turned his horse and rode down the canyon followed by Satan's Pet.

"To-morrow night your man is on duty; that much we found out," said the ex-Danite.

"I can bido my time; there is no hurry," was the quiet response, and back to their camp they went to pass the time until the next night.

But then promptly they were on hand, and up to the guard they rode, until again halted.

"I am Captain Vane," said Satan's Pet, raising himself in his saddle, and imitating the voice of that officer.

The Danite guard politely saluted, and answered:

"Have you any orders, major?"

"Major; that looks as though he had been promoted in Leigh's place," muttered the youth, while he answered aloud:

"Yes, I have orders for your special ear, my man."

Riding up to the sentinel, who wholly unsuspected wrong, be bent over and suddenly seized his throat, while he thrust a revolver into his face, and hissed forth:

"Move or utter a cry and I fire."

The man was startled nearly out of his wits, and made not the slightest show of resistance.

Slipping to the ground Satan's Pet called to his companion to fasten the horses and follow, and he forced his prisoner into the passage to the gate of the Death Den Cavern.

"Now unlock this door, sir!"

Silently and with trembling hands the man obeyed.

There is a lantern here somewhere?"

"Yes."

"Get it, but remember you die if you cry out: here, Hunton, take his belt of arms."

"Sh—sir, don't call my name to him."

"It makes no difference; he will never tell," was the significant reply.

The lantern was found and lighted, and Satan's Pet said:

"Now tell me where is Major John Leigh?"

"In his coffin, where you will be for this night's work, Major Vane," was the sullen reply.

"I am not Major Elmo Vane: look at me."

He turned the lantern upon his face and the man started back, while he cried in horror:

"Satan's Pet!"

"You have named me: and you are my pet, for you are number twelve of the Red Dozen!"

"That man is another, for I see him now."

"Oh I have absolved Hunton of his sins; but you, you red-handed devil, must die."

"No, no, for you will be merciful."

"Not I; it's not in my composition against such as you."

"But first show me the coffin of Major Leigh."

The guard went to the niche and said:

"This is his shelf."

"Pull the coffin out!"

"I dare not."

"Obey!"

The motion of Satan's Pet was so significant that he thought better of his refusal and obeyed.

"By heaven! I told you so!"

The coffin was empty, and the cry broke from the lips of Satan's Pet.

In his surprise and delight he momentarily forgot his prisoner.

But the prisoner had not forgotten himself, and made a bold stroke for freedom.

Out of the hand of Satan's Pet he knocked the lantern, and it fell to the rocky flooring, and was shattered in pieces.

All was darkness, and away bounded the sentinel.

An instant Satan's Pet listened to the retreating footsteps, and then came the flash and report of his revolver.

A heavy fall and a groan followed:

"You got him, thank the Prophet!" cried the delighted Hunton.

"Thank me, not the Prophet, pard," was the cool reply, and feeling his way forward in the darkness his foot touched the prostrate form.

Bending over he laid his hand on the man's heart.

It had ceased to beat.

Searching he found the bullet wound in the back.

"It went through the heart, and I know the fate of Number Twelve," he said calmly.

"Then let us leave, sir."

"I am ready."

They found their way to the gate, passed out, locking it after them, and once out in the starlight Satan's Pet wrote on a piece of paper with a pencil:

"With the compliments of
Satan's Pet,
The Danites' Foe."

This he stuck on the bayonet of the sentinel, and then the two men rode away in the darkness, Hunton leading the way to the lonely cabin of the Danite's wife, for he knew that secret of John Leigh, having been one of the trusted few.

CHAPTER XLII.

A PAIR OF PRECIOUS PARDS.

"Ef yer ha'r wa'n't so white, an' yer beard so gray an' grizzly b'ar like, I'd say them eyes were in ther head o' John Leigh."

The speaker was Hercules Bluff, and he had overtaken a man hastening from an Angels' Rest grocery-store, with a supply of provisions just purchased, and making for the mountains.

The one so addressed was dressed as a miner, was slightly bent in form, or assumed it, and had snow white hair falling on his shoulders, and a graying beard.

He was evidently startled at the address of the Hercules, for he dropped the sack of provisions, and bundle he carried, and turned quickly with his hand on a revolver.

"Henry Hall!" he gasped, not making any attempt to use his pistol.

"Called Hercules Bluff in these parts, Pard John, so don't go back to pick me up by a name I hasn't heerd fer years."

"Not siace you signed it without the junior affixed, to your uncle's check, for whom you were named," said John Leigh.

"Lordy, that leetle biz were Sunday-school teachin' ter what I hes did since," was the unabashed reply.

"Well, that caused you to light out from our old town, Henry."

"Hirkerlees—I told yer; H-i-r-k-e-r—hirker—l-e-e-s—Hirkerlees."

"Well, I stick to my old name I had when we were boy chums."

"No need ter change it, fer it were bad enough then."

"Yer c'u'd scholar consid'ble, John, while I were a dunce on books; but yer were thet wicked yer broke yer old mother's heart; what is yer doin' now?"

"Mining."

"Thet's good, when ther dust pans out; but seems to me I hes heerd yer were up among ther Mormons."

"I was once; but what are you doing?"

"Digging, lyin', cussin', cheatin', shootin', an' doin' bad in general."

"Well, Hen—"

"Hirk—"

"All right; well, Hercules, keep dark about meeting me; call me Jack—well, I'll borrow your old name—Jack Hall, and I'll take you to my cabin in the mountains, and introduce you to my wife."

"How many?"

"One."

"Though yer were a Mormon Danite?"

"I was."

"Hain't now?"

"Not exactly."

"Yas, yer changes yer spots, I sees."

"When it suits me."

"Waal, travel me ter yer camp an' interdooce me."

"You'll not gossip?"

"Nary, on a old pard."

"Well, come along."

"Are she slick?" he asked, as John Leigh took up his bundles and walked on."

"She is beautiful, if that's what you mean."

"Seems ter me yer married life hasn't been cheerful livin'."

"Why?"

"Yer isn't more 'n seven year older nor me, an' yer hair is white as yer mother's were."

"Yes, it is prematurely gray."

"It are durned gray, that's what it are; but I thinks o' marryin', too."</

"Great God!" and John Leigh turned deadly pale.

"Has yer got 'em, Jack?"

"Is that fellow, Satan's Pet, here?"

"He were; he an' Bill were pards, an' they is a team, I kin tell yer."

"Where are they now?"

"Levanted."

"Where?"

"Don't know; guess they hain't lost."

"What were they doing here?"

"As near as I kin find out they comed ter see my gals."

"You are a Mormon too?"

"Not adzactly; but I are in love with two leetle gals as is lovely."

"But Bill and Satan's Pet cut you out?"

"Durn 'em, no! I'll kill both Dolores an' Hortense fust," he said savagely.

"Dolores and Hortense?" cried John Leigh excitedly.

"Yas, them's the'r handles, an' they is beauties from Beautyville, I'll sw'ar, tho' they laughed when I 'ot licked an' I doesn't love 'em so much now; but I hadn't forgot 'em, I'll tell you, confidential like, Jack."

"Where are these ladies?"

"At ther kinfolks, old Judge Moultrie's."

"Hal!"

"Ef yer wants ter laff, laff out, and don't say ha and quit, same as yer had taken cramps."

"I do want to laugh from joy, Hercules, for I am so glad I have met you."

"But, mind you, not one word about these ladies, to my wife."

"Yes, I see; she shows her claws."

"She is a devil when aroused," and the face of John Leigh became flushed with triumph, at having accidentally struck the trail of Dolores and Hortense.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHAT SATAN'S PET HEARD.

"WELL, Cody, which is the trail?" and a party of four horsemen drew up at a spot where the trail they were following down the mountain divided.

The speaker was dressed in uniform; in fact he was none other than Captain Howland Moncrief, who had left his command at Fort Uintah, some days before, in company with Buffalo Bill, Satan's Pet, and the ex-Danite Hunton, and were on their way to Angels' Rest, where, accidentally, the young officer had heard that Dolores Moultrie then was, and the hearing of which had made him quickly ask leave of absence for a few weeks.

"This is the trail, captain," said Buffalo Bill, bearing to the right.

"I'll take this one," said Satan's Pet firmly.

"You'll wind back up the mountain then, Pet," said Cody.

"Can't help it, Bill; you go that way, and I'll come along soon, for I believe in presents, and something tells me I'll go right in taking this trail."

"Then we'll all go that way."

"No, Captain Moncrief; you and Bill go that way, and Hunton and myself will take this trail, and join you among the Angels of the valley," and the party divided.

For some time Satan's Pet, with Hunton following close behind, rode on, and then the trail branched off into a dozen deer-paths up the mountain.

"Cody was right; oh! there's a cabin, and I'll see who has camped in this lonely place," said Satan's Pet, and he threw his bridle to his companion, and dismounting, walked the hundred paces to the little log cabin on the mountain side.

As he approached he heard voices, and suddenly his face grew pale and then flushed with excitement.

Within the cabin he knew there were two persons, and he crept nearer and listened.

The words that had arrested his attention, and so moved him with emotion, were spoken in a woman's voice.

"Oh, John, you would not do such a cruel wrong?" she said.

Then came the answer in the voice of a man:

"It is no wrong in my eyes; I have striven hard to win promotion, and the result was that accused old Moultrie sent me to my death."

"I know that the Prophet would pardon me, and as the first step I wish to send him those two girls."

"They already know too much, as the Prophet shall be informed, and will be summoned as witnesses of that massacre, and he would do much to have them in his power before the states Government begins on him."

"Old Moultrie, he will find, did deceive him, and I was right about the women being in his house, and the result will be that I get to be chief, and Moultrie finds a berth in a coffin in the Death Den, while I am pardoned."

"Now you know my plan."

"You are keeping something back, John Leigh."

"I am not."

"I say that you are."

"Well, Hercules Bluff is to turn Danite."

"I heard you pledge him one of those maidens as a wife, and a captaincy under you, if he

went to Salt Lake and got your pardon from the Prophet."

"Yes, I did; but do you think I intended to keep it?"

"What! you intended to deceive him?"

"Of course; I would use him as a tool, have him capture the two girls and carry them to the city, and I have written the Prophet a letter in cipher to have Hercules at once put to death, as he is a dangerous character."

"For shame, John."

"I do not want him there; he is too dangerous a man."

"Well, have you nothing more to tell?"

"Only that Hercules has gone after the girls; he had his plans laid to capture them in their morning ride this morning, and by noon he will be here with them."

"Well, what else?"

"That is all, Queen."

"No."

"I say it is."

"You are deceiving me."

"I am not; you are to go with me and be my Queen forever."

"There is something else."

"Don't be silly, Queen."

"John Leigh, I studied out your letter in cipher to the Prophet."

The man was on his feet, and Satan's Pet heard a savage oath, and then his words:

"Curse you! you saw then that one of the maidens was to be my wife?"

"Yes, John Leigh, and I know more."

"Well, I care not what you know."

"So I believe, when I overheard you tell that huge brute, that you intended to get rid of me."

"He asked you how?"

"Your answer was, John Leigh:

"Put my knife in her heart."

"Then, by the gods, I'll keep my word, Queen Conrad."

The man fairly shrieked the words.

But, with the spring that he made toward her, his knife in his hand, his whole face frenzied with passion, the door was thrown open and Satan's Pet bounded into the cabin, seized him with herculean strength, and hurled him to the floor, while he placed his foot upon his breast, and pointed his revolver down in his face.

"We are well met at last, John Leigh," he cried, in hoarse tones.

Queen, who had given a cry of alarm at her danger, and tottering back, had fainted, lay like one dead upon the floor.

The knife had fallen from the grasp of the Danite, and his revolvers were on the table out of reach, so he felt his utterly helpless condition.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A LIFE-DEBT PAID.

THOUGH John Leigh knew well he was in the power of one he had no reason to expect mercy from, he determined to brazen it out to the last, and exclaimed angrily:

"How dare you call me by the name of that accursed Danite, John Leigh?"

"Well said, thou accursed Danite, John Leigh.

"But I know you, in spite of your hair, whitened by your crimes; ay, and I know who lies there."

"And you, John Leigh, shall know that I am Arnold Aubrey Conrad, the brother of yonder poor woman; the son of the poor old couple you lured out West to kill, hoping to get a fortune thereby, which your wife, my sister, would inherit.

"But you found that misfortune had come upon my parents, and you were foiled."

"You thought that I had been killed in that massacre two years ago."

"But no, I hid away from even your red fiends, and, excepting one man whom you forced to do your black deeds, you alone live."

"But, John Leigh, the hour of your death has come."

With a corpse-like face the guilty man had listened to the words of the boy who stood over him; but, as he ceased speaking, he cried:

"Mercy!"

"I shall show no mercy," and putting his fingers to his lips he gave three sharp, shrill whistles.

Almost immediately Hunton came running into the cabin, for, alarmed at the long absence of Satan's Pet, he had approached the spot.

"Good God!"

The cry broke from the lips of the Danite, when he saw who it was that entered.

"Oh! I'm alive and glad to see you well, major," cried Hunton, when, with a start, he saw who it was beneath the feet of Satan's Pet.

"Yes, but I have diagnosed his case, Hunton, and can take oath he won't live long," was the cool reply of Satan's Pet.

"Shall we hang him, sir?"

"Yes, get my lariat."

Hunton hastily obeyed.

Quickly and scientifically this command was carried out.

Together the two raised the Danite to his feet, and he tottered with weakness from fright.

Then they led him out of the cabin, the end of the lariat was thrown over a limb and drawn taut.

"Come, old horse, you shall do the dirty work," said Satan's Pet, and he fastened the end of the lariat to the bow of his Mexican saddle.

"Now, John Leigh, you have lived your last minute on earth. Come, old fellow, do your part well!"

A chirp to his horse, and the animal followed his master, and the shriek for mercy on the lips of John Leigh ended in a choking sound, as he was lifted from his feet and hoisted in mid-air.

"Halt!"

The obedient animal obeyed, and folding his arms, Satan's Pet stood gazing calmly up at the struggling form of the guilty man who so richly deserved his fate, while a short distance apart Hunton was standing, the only other visible witness of the fearful death scene.

Until the last tremor had gone through the swinging form, Satan's Pet stood there in silence, gazing upon the victim of his hate and revenge, and then he moved toward the cabin, saying, quietly:

"Hunton, he is dead; cut him down."

Opening the door of the cabin, Satan's Pet started back.

Instead of finding the form of the woman, now known to be his sister, lying on the floor still in a swoon, he beheld her crouching upon her knees, her hands clasped, her face livid, and her staring eyes gazing through the open window and fixed upon the swinging form of John Leigh, the Danite.

"Sister! Queen! I have avenged you and our parents, murdered by his hand," cried the youth, in ringing tones.

"Aubrey! my brother!"

She could say no more, but threw herself in his arms and burst into tears, for at last the fountains of her grief-haunted heart were opened, and she knew that she had a protector in her brother, and that she was not alone in the wide world.

And then for a long time these two sat hand in hand in the little cabin, while Hunton placed in the grave the body of John Leigh, the Danite.

And each told to the other the story of their past since last they had met, and from out the blank clouds of sorrow in the heart came a ray of sunshine for the future.

CHAPTER XLV.

WELL MET.

WONDERING at the strange act of Satan's Pet, in deserting them for a trail that Buffalo Bill knew led away from the valley, and chatting about the strange youth, and his determined desire for revenge, the scout and Captain Moncrief rode on their way toward Angels' Rest.

Suddenly, as they came to a point, where a fine view of the distant valley could be seen, Buffalo Bill drew rein, and hastily leveled a field-glass he always carried with him.

"Pard captain, we'll just wait here, for these rocks will hide us, and give a surprise party to some one I see coming up the hill," said the scout.

"Who is it, Bill?" asked Captain Moncrief, reining his horse back behind the boulder.

"First, it is a man who has been in mischief: he is Hercules Bluff, whom I had to thrash some time ago—"

"Yes, Pet told me about it."

"He has a pard with him whom I do not know; but I will swear that he is a villain."

"Then there are two ladies with them."

"Ladies with such villains, Bill?"

"Yes, captain; but I guess they don't care to remain in such bad company, so we'll just take them away from Bluff and his pard."

"I do not like to interfere with women—"

"Captain, I saw them though my glass, and one is Miss Moultrie and the other, Miss Harmon."

"By the God of War! Cody, I am ready to fight it out."

"That man holds them as prisoners, for some vile purpose."

"That's true, captain; but we are well met, and we'll bluff Mister Hercules's little game."

"I'll take him for a waltzing pard, and you take his comrade and we'll sail out at the word, but don't hit the ladies."

"I'm a dead shot, Bill."

"I know that, captain; but you're in love now, and a man in that condition—"

"Sh—! Bill, I hear their horses' hoof-strokes."

"You'll hear more than that presently, captain."

Then the two friends sat in silence, awaiting the coming of the party, who were urging their horses hard.

"Charge!"

The cry broke in trumpet tones from the lips of Buffalo Bill, and like arrows shot from bows, their horses sprung away from the boulder, and were alongside of the two ruffians before they could draw a weapon.

And they came to a sudden halt, and neither dared offer resistance, as a revolver muzzle was pressed hard against their heads.

So sudden had been the charge that it startled both Dolores and Hortense at first, but recognizing their deliverers at a glance, the former spoke the name of the captain, while they both called out the name of the scout.

"We have met again, Hercules Bluff, and I warn you that my bullets are harder than my fist," said Buffalo Bill, sternly.

"Yer durned fists is too hard fer me; but I guesses I is done fer."

"And me too, pard Hercules, durn yer fer gittin' a honest man inter sich a scrape," said the other villain.

"Yes, the devil wants just such honest men as you are for kindling-wood," said Buffalo Bill, and then he continued:

"Miss Hortense, be kind enough to take those weapons out of this gentleman's belt, for they are too heavy for him to carry."

With a light laugh Hortense obeyed, while Dolores did a like favor for Captain Moncrief.

"Now, captain, we'll lasso these gentlemen with the aid of the young ladies," said the scout.

The maidens were only too glad to be of service, and in a short while Hercules Bluff and his pard were securely bound and tied to their horses.

"Now let us make for the valley, for I know these gentlemen are anxious to go to roost in a tree."

"Durnation! yer isn't goin' ter hang us, is yer, Buffalo Bill?" cried Hercules Bluff.

"I am going to distribute you among the Vigilantes of Angels' Rest, and—"

"They'll h'list us, sartin, Bill."

"If they don't, I will."

"Oh Lordy! Buck, yer'd better rastle up what scriptur' yer knows, an' sling in a doxology fer me, as all I knows is a Hallylujah."

"I'd ruther put a bullet in yer fer gittin' me in this heur scrape," growled the other villain, as he came on behind between Captain Moncrief and Dolores.

"Say, pard, don't sass me ef we hes got ter travel ther same road together," answered Hercules.

"Bluff, you've got nerve, and it's a pity such a splendid-looking man as you are should be such a devil," said Buffalo Bill.

"Ther heart weren't put in ther right place, Pard Bill, I guesses.

"But if they hangs me it'll take a stout rope ter hang me, an' nary one will hear me shout."

"I believe you," frankly answered the scout, and urging their horses into a canter, they dashed on at a more rapid pace and soon after drew rein before the home of Judge Moultrie, where already a large party of horsemen, armed to the teeth, had assembled to go in pursuit of the kidnappers, for a miner had seen the maidens captured while out riding that morning.

"Gentlemen, here is the game we bring you," said Buffalo Bill pointing to the two desperadoes.

"And I guesses we'll be durned well cooked game, Pard Buck, afore they is done with us," muttered Hercules Bluff, as the band of horsemen surrounded them, and with wild cries dashed away toward the town to rouse all the Vigilantes to action.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CONCLUSION.

THAT the Vigilantes of Angels' Rest made short work of Hercules Bluff and his wicked comrade, the reader can well understand, knowing the wild characters of the far frontier at that time.

And the townspeople were so charmed with Buffalo Bill for having brought back, as the miners expressed it, "them boss angilster Angil Rest," they wished to make him Grand Mogul, an honor he declined with thanks, to return to his command, where he had been promoted to chief of scouts and guides.

When next he visited the valley it was to accompany Captain Howland Moncrief, as "best man," when that handsome and noble-hearted young officer wedded Dolores Moultrie, the one-time Danite's daughter, but whose father had cast off forever the cloak of Mormonism, and accompanied the happy couple on their bridal tour East, to the captain's home, and where they were all welcomed most kindly by Mrs. Moncrief, who looked with such favor on the ex-chief, she laid her snare, and caught him in the net of matrimony, from which he did not seem anxious to escape.

And Hortense?

The Judge and his wife not only refused to give her up, but adopted her as their child, and received as her governess none other than the sad-faced woman who had been a Mormon wife.

But three years after they were compelled to resign the beautiful maiden, and her governess too, as two persons arrived one day who held a

love claim against them which they had promised to pay.

These two holders of the claims were Lieutenant Aubrey Conrad, of the United States army, and once known as Satan's Pet, and the other was, like his chief, a repentant Danite, Elmo Vane, who, with his beautiful Queen, sought in a foreign land to forget the sorrows they had known in their life in Deseret.

THE END.

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